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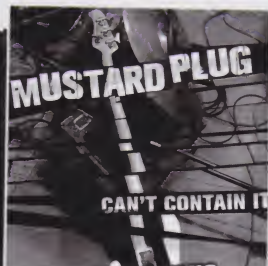
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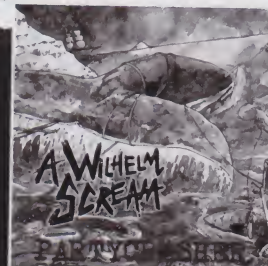
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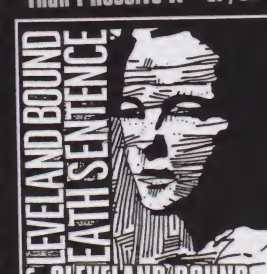
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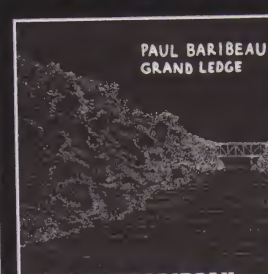


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Razorcake provides consistent coverage of do-it-yourself punk culture that you won't find anywhere else. We believe in positive, progressive, community-friendly DIY punk. We do our part. That hasn't changed in thirteen years and it's not about to change.

DIY punk culture is often misrepresented, misunderstood, and the target of corporate exploitation. Razorcake supports a legit community of punk music and culture as the only bona fide 501(c)(3) non-profit music magazine in America.

Our bi-monthly fanzine is a one-of-a-kind resource for the DIY punk community. Over the years, Razorcake has developed this resource to help document every facet of this culture. The Razorcake Gorsky umbrella also includes book publishing, record pressing, live shows and readings, and a thriving web presence that maintains weekly podcasts, webcomics, and videos.

Our open participation policy means anyone can become a contributor. Currently, Razorcake offers a forum for over 180 long-term independent volunteer writers, photographers, illustrators, and musicians from around the world. We take pride in our scenes and represent them internationally. We also distribute the magazine to over twenty countries.

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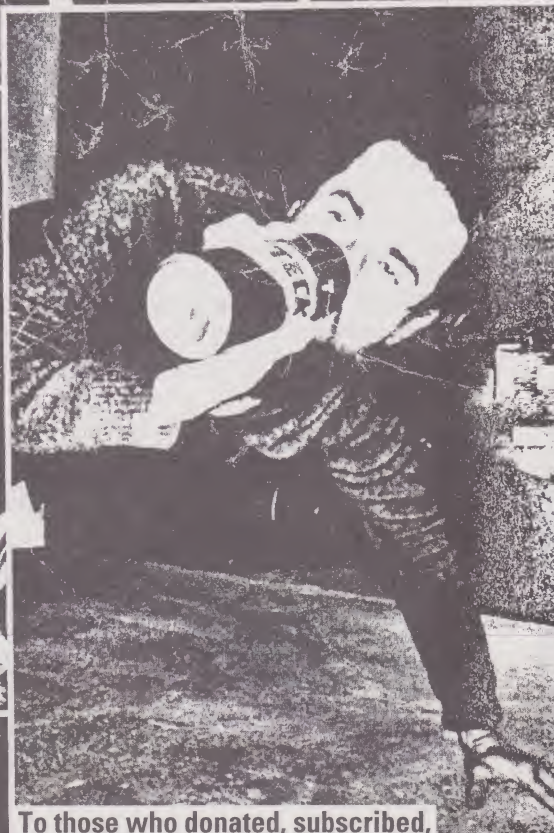
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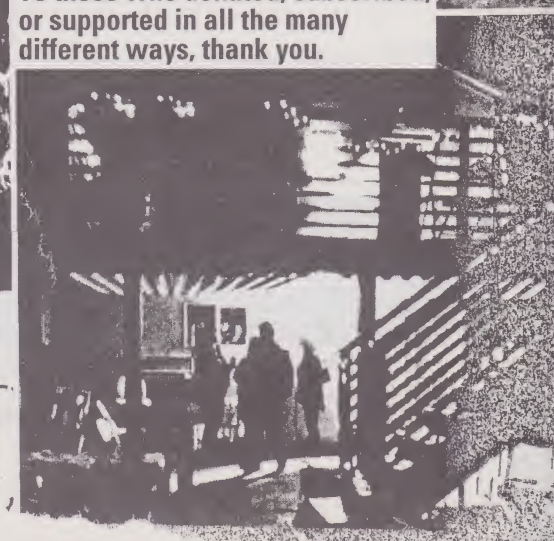
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## Sometimes I Forget

If TV has taught me anything, it's that watching someone get punched in the face is different than me getting punched in the face. If life has taught me anything, it's that watching other people show affection to one another is different than holding, kissing, or touching someone myself. Observing something or being inches away from is not the same as active participation. You're still inhabiting a slightly different world. Just to be clear: I'm not suggesting you get punched in the face and then pull an attractive stranger in for a kiss. That's a bad idea.

I'm saying put yourself *out* there; put yourself *in* there. Pragmatic tactility. Get to know how something really works through immersion and calibrate your expectations accordingly. Work at your craft and arts for yourself. Be selfish about it. Good shit will probably happen. Bad shit will most likely happen, too. Curious shit out of your hands will definitely happen.

DIY—Do It Yourself—has been appropriated by shoe corporations and home supply megastores. No news there. But, I see it as a dictum. “Do It.” After all the thinking about it, watching all of it, and talking about it—going out and actually doing it. And, DIY punk’s clarifying in that way.

We’ve all heard the scapegoating: “Oh, dude, it was Janice in accounting’s fault that I didn’t get my zine/record/photos/movie/writing done in time.”

But, everyone knows that it was you, in fact, who didn’t get your shit done. Yes, I understand there are important video games to play, meals to take pictures of and post online, and stuff to smoke. Got it. You want social justice, dolphins in government posts, cops to give massages, bicycles to replace nuclear energy, and kale to swap out

soda. I’m theoretically on board, but I’m impatient with people who overpromise and then don’t produce. These are people who point fingers at Janice in accounting and don’t collaborate.

I’m a bit of dick that way. I have little time for trolls and “you-know-what-you-should-doers.”

Just don’t expect rewards outside of the process. Some DIY punk projects are just bad or could use vast improvement (see the review section). Not everyone gets a trophy for participation or a confetti-soaked ride in the back of a convertible. Just because you think you’re good at something doesn’t necessarily mean you are. Props for trying. Pain and rejection can also be helpful motivators. Maybe you are just a great worker bee in a dead-end job. Now you know. Sorry.

I also live in a world where resumes and curriculum vitae don’t mean shit to me. “No Gods. No Masters,” in Razorcake-speak, means leave the institutions at the door. We’re equal. Diploma. Congratulations. Let’s get this thing moving. ¡*Vámanos!* Show me what you know on paper, on vinyl, on the screen—now, today. (The end of 2013 was lousy with phenomenal records. See the review section again.)

Are we ghosts to our own lives, stuffing ourselves on internet feeds of perfectly cropped images captured via fancy camera filters to produce an edited version of “life”? Are we merely the referees to a game we wish we were playing ourselves? Are we merely voyeurs of actors in romantic comedies? Are we merely the comments section to a web post that’s long been erased? Are we watching someone else get punched in the face and saying, “Ohhh, that must’ve hurt”?

I know I’m not. I’m always working on so much that sometimes I forget... forget that most of the world is content with being ghosts.

—Todd Taylor

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Wanda Coleman.

Cover design by Mitch Clem  
Watercolors by Nation Of Amanda

“There’s real  
power when  
words attach  
to actual  
things.”

—Ben Fountain,  
*Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk*

**THANK YOU:** We’re like the Thomas Guide of punk! thanks to Mitch Clem for the cover illo. and Nation of Amanda for the watercolors; Wait, there’s a video game after Pong? thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean’s column; There’s inconvenience and then there’s life thanks to Jackie Rusted’s illo. in Jim’s column; Tornado-ic blood bag thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Cassie J. Snider’s column; That hot dog with a wig sure can be read visually two ways thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Norb’s column; Why did the lady in high heels cross over the Chicken’s body? There’s a joke in there somewhere thanks to Evan Wolff for his illo.; “Trees? What is this, hippie time?” R-A-M-O-N-E-S thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo. in Dale’s column; Look at the folds of the brain on that one thanks to both Caitlin Hoffman (new columnist!) and Cassie J. Snider for her mindful illo.; I loved Buster Keaton in Gung Ho! thanks to Donna Ramone, Bone Dust, and Wells Tiple for the words, illos, and layout for “One Punk’s Guide to Silent Films”; From kicking H in the federal pen to warm nachos on the merch table, Bümbläätt’s got it covered thanks to Rene Navarro, Matthew Hart, Jeff Proctor, Donofthedeat, and Victor Sanchez for the interview, transcription, preparation, and photos; One day, when we get an intern and there’s nothing to do, their job will be to count how many beer opening sounds happen during this interview thanks to Kevin Dunn, Matthew Hart, Ryan Maddox, Paul Silver, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, and Lauren Measure for the Low Culture interview, photos, transcription, and layout; Have I never seen a pop punk band perform inside a ball pit, the type that kids swim in? Why do I think Jabber would excel in such an environment? Thanks to Kevin Dunn, Kelly Lone, Paul Silver, and Matt Terribly Average for the interview, photos, and layout. If you are a woman who is knowledgeable about DIY punk and are good with deadlines, this is an open invitation to apply to be a member of our reviewer corps: #78’s rotation of music, zines, books, and video reviewers—in roughly the order they turned their reviews in: Ryan Leach, Kurt Morris, Ian Wise, Garrett Barnwell, Mike Frame, Indiana Laub, James Meier, Rich Cocksedge, Sean Arenas, Juan Espinosa, Ryan Nichols, Keith Rosson, Chris Terry, Brent Nimz, Jeff Proctor, Matt Seward, Dave Williams, Art Ettinger, Chad Williams, Bryan Static, Matt Average, Steve Adamyk, Camille Reynolds, Tim Brooks, Billups Allen, John Mule, MP Johnson, Michael T. Fournier, Mark Twistworthy, Matt Werts, Sal Lucci, Sean Koeppenick, Ty Stranglehold, Jim Joyce, Paul J. Comeau, Jimmy Alvarado, Norb, Jim Woster, Simon Sotelo, Candice Tobin, Bianca Barragan, and Dave Brainwreck. The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn’t be what it is: Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Phill Legault, Chris Baxter, Mary Clare Stevens, Marty Ploy, Rene Navarro, Janeth Galaviz, Rishbha Bhagi, Adrian Chi, Megan Pants, Alex Martinez, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Meztli Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Aaron Kovacs, Nicole Macias, Yvonne Drazan, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Chris Pepus, George Lopez, Tim Burkett, Jeff Proctor, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Johnny Volume, Jennifer Federico, Arnold Benedict, Nighthawk, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Cassie J. Snider, Eryc Why, Ronnie Sullivan, Marcus Solomon, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Jason Armadillo, Laura Collins, Nation of Amanda, Timothy Tang, Caitlin Hoffman, Billy Kostka, Derek “Tanning Bed” Whipple, Bianca Barragan, Cheryl Klein, Russ Van Cleave, Christine Arguello, Simon Sotelo, Susan Chung, Robert El Diablo, Bryan Static, Mitch Clem, John Miskelly, Jamie Rotante, Chris Rager, and Max Puhala.



Rare pre-Rhythm Chicken photo, circa 1987  
(Dated by the All tour of the Descendents in the background.)

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Issue #78 Feb. / March 2014

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Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Dan Clarke, Katy Spining, Leo Emil Tober III, Catherine Casada Hornberger, and Daryl Gussin.

This issue of *Razorcake* and the last two months of *razorcake.org* were put together by: Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, James Hernandez, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Phill Legault, Chris Baxter, Mary Clare Stevens, Marty Ploy, Rene Navarro, Janeth Galaviz, Rishbha Bhagi, Adrian Chi, Megan Pants, Alex Martinez, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Meztlí Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Aaron Kovacs, Nicole Macias, Yvonne Drazan, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Chris Pepus, George Lopez, Tim Burkett, Jeff Proctor, Josh Rosa, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Johnny Volume, Jennifer Federico, Arnold Benedict, Nighthawk, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Cassie J. Sneider, Eryc Why, Ronnie Sullivan, Marcus Solomon, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Jason Armadillo, Laura Collins, Nation of Amanda, Timothy Tang, Caitlin Hoffman, Billy Kostka, Derek "Tanning Bed" Whipple, Bianca Barragan, Cheryl Klein, Russ Van Cleave, Christine Arguello, Simon Sotelo, Susan Chung, Robert El Diablo, Bryan Static, Mitch Clem, John Miskelly, Jamie Rotante, Chris Rager, and Max Puhala.

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"History nowadays is recorded in memorabilia. If you can't purchase a shopping bag that alludes to something, people won't believe it ever happened." —Elizabeth McCracken, *The Giant's House*

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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of *Razorcake*/Gorsky Press, Inc.



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## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**"Pac Man is the perfect metaphor for understanding middle age."**

# Blue Ghosts

I'm always unimpressed on the first listen of every Riverboat Gamblers album. It's been this way with me for every one of their albums. I decide that they're overrated or that their best work is in the past. I give them a second or third or fortieth chance and, sooner or later, the music latches into my brain and the new album becomes my favorite for a time. I started this way with *Something to Crow About* a decade ago. Todd kept playing it around Razorcake HQ, and I didn't understand his fascination. It was good. It was good enough that, when he wanted to put them on the cover of issue #21, I didn't argue. I just didn't think it was great.

Then we went skating one day. Todd played the album in his truck as we rolled east on the 210 toward the Whittier park and, for whatever reason, I got it. The album was fucking awesome.

Every album worked the same way. I didn't get it until, suddenly, I did.

The Gamblers latest, *The Wolf You Feed*, is taking the longest for me. I've had the album for almost a year, giving it listen after listen and feeling largely apathetic about it. It's okay. It's pretty good. Not much more.

Until, finally, it creeps into the foreground.

I'm up early and listening to music on headphones so everyone else in my place can sleep. I decide to give *The Wolf You Feed* one more shot. It's decent background noise while I knock out the previous night's dishes. Just as I'm sitting down to my bowl of cereal, "Blue Ghosts" comes on. For the first time, I really listen. It's a song about Pac Man and the past, those ghosts we're chasing that are also chasing us, the mazes we're caught in, the game that doesn't end, that you can't really win.

When the song ends, I play it again and listen again.

"Blue Ghosts" stays stuck in my brain as I ride my motorcycle to work. It's a twenty-minute commute with no music. On many mornings, I sing to myself. I know it's goofy: singing punk rock songs into a motorcycle helmet while I ride down a Southern California freeway. Because I'm usually going seventy, seventy-five mph and no one can hear anyway, I usually sing as loud as I can. Sometimes, when I'm not singing,

I take stock. I look at the others who share the freeway with me, the fat cubicle workers gnawing on their fast-food egg sandwiches, the self-important suits screaming into a phone lodged in their ear, the young women drifting into my lane while they type something like LOL into their smart phones, everyone doing anything but driving while we all hurtle forward at speeds that, up until about a century ago, humans never achieved unless they were falling to their deaths.

When I think about it this way, singing punk rock into a motorcycle helmet makes as much sense as anything else.

The last leg of my commute runs through farmland. I'm still singing "Blue Ghosts" inside my helmet. It triggers a memory of when the Gamblers album *To the Confusion of Our Enemies* came out. I would sing "Black Nothing of a Cat" to myself as I rode into campus. Several years have passed. I'm riding a different motorcycle, singing into a different helmet. With "Black Nothing," I'd sing and think about when I was a kid like the kid in the song, trying to figure out adolescence and this bizarre world I'd been born into. With "Blue Ghosts," I'm thinking about Pac Man and middle age.

I'm sure I'm not the first person to notice this. Obviously, Mike Wiebe noticed it when he wrote "Blue Ghosts." I doubt he was the first person to notice this, either: Pac Man is the perfect metaphor for understanding middle age. The game started out fun. You just bopped around, eating some dots, fucking around with some other people in the maze. Sometimes you'd take them down, sometimes they'd take you down. What did it matter? You both had plenty of lives left. But then you get to a point where the extra lives are running down. Everything starts moving faster. You realize that you can go to the next level, but you can't get out of the maze. There's no way to win this. Even if you get a high score, you die at the end. So you just go around in loops, mindlessly consuming dots that you don't even really want, chasing ghosts or getting chased by ghosts, having less and less fun until it finally, mercifully, ends.

Happy thoughts.

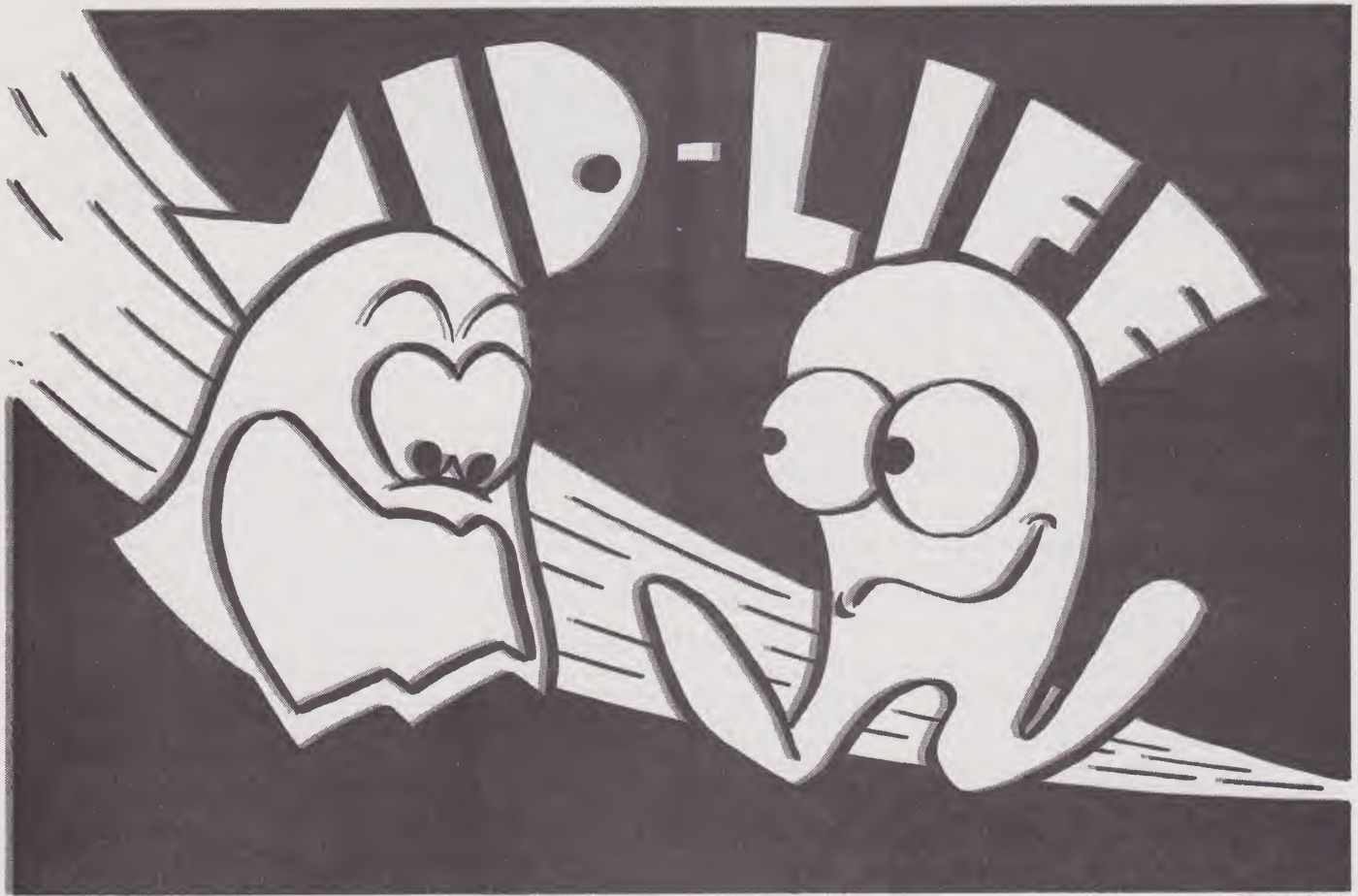
Part of my morning's work is taken up by administrative tasks. A lot of professors

complain about this type of work. When I get older, I'll probably complain about it, too. For right now, I still have the perspective of the carpenter I used to be. I used to do the heavy work of building houses in the Florida sun for one-fifth of the money I make now. If I have to sit in a committee meeting to decide something as boring as a campus internship policy, I'll do it. As long as I can still feel the ghost of a tool belt hanging from my hips, I'm happy to have that weight lifted. As long as I can still envision the empty space below me while building a roof, I'll be happy to have a job where I get to keep my feet on the ground all day.

Besides, the shallow parts of the job allow me to spend all the time I do with the deep parts of the job. After the meeting, I head off to teach a class. I love teaching writing and lit courses. The search for meaning in life is at the core of what I do. It's no easy feat to learn how to articulate your thoughts into words that others get. One of the greatest challenges we all face is trying to say some facsimile of what we mean.

The other half of an English class is even tougher. We have to learn to listen to others, hear their stories, understand what they're trying to communicate, and reinterpret that into our own conceptions of the world. On a daily basis, I get to read the works of brilliant people who tried to mold their conceptions of love and friendship into something that enriches readers' lives. I get to talk with students about how and why they find significance in the world. Together, we struggle with the Faustian bargain the human species seems to have struck: We get the cognitive abilities to be the dominant species on the planet, yet these same cognitive abilities come with the knowledge of our own inevitable death. How do we learn to live with that?

In the Pac Man world, we live with it by running around the maze at perpetually higher speeds, trying to consume all we can while we can. In the logic of late capitalism, there is a meaning of life, and consumption is it. We consume. We're consumers. We mitigate our fears of death and existential abysses by purchasing the latest Apple product. We forget that it was made by labor practices as exploitative as the antebellum plantation system. We forget that, after we take it to "electronics recycling" when it's



BRAD BESHAW

# There's no way to win this. Even if you get a high score, you die at the end.

obsolete in three years, it's going to end up in a Ghanaian landfill, poisoning the local water supply. We just keep eating the dots and moving on to the next maze.

Living outside the Pac Man world, it's not that simple. In reality, I've never had a problem for which an iPad was the solution. I'm concerned with other things. It goes back to Mike Wiebe and the song that's been stuck in my head all morning, "Blue Ghosts." I can listen to that first verse and get a sense of what he's wrestling with. He's "still trying to forget/ a mother and a father that I never met." This may mean, literally, that he was adopted and he struggles with that emotionally. It may not be so literal. He may just feel, in some way, abandoned or neglected by people he loved or felt he should've loved. These feelings haunt him like the ghosts in Pac Man. He can't tell if he's chasing them or they're chasing him, which sounds to me like that nagging feeling I get sometimes that I'm looking for things to be upset about, searching for something to justify my feelings of free-floating depression.

When Mike sings, "I try to win a game that has no end," the song goes to the next level for me. He's talking about life and death.

How long do we let these ghosts chase us, especially when we know that we "have no lives left," we'll "never get the high score"? The song's bridge ends with "these dots never fill me up." Consumption will never be enough. It'll always be an empty maze.

That's where the music fits the song perfectly. The riff throughout the song is just a few notes, each one hit eight or sixteen times in a row, incredibly fast. All building to a breakdown in the middle of the song. The rhythm guitar, bass, and drums then push the lead guitar and vocals into an ending that feels like an infinite loop—especially because Mike sings, "An infinite loop" about a dozen times.

A few years ago, when the Gamblers' *Backsides* came out, I kept getting the song, "I Think I'm Wonderful" stuck in my head. I didn't know any words except for the ones in the title. I wandered through my days mumbling the melody, then singing the chorus: *I think I'm wonderful*. I was in a good mood for weeks.

"Blue Ghosts" leaves me with more serious thoughts, but I'm in a good mood

about it, anyway. It reminds me of a Bucky Sinister poem about buying a condo. As Bucky goes through the steps of buying his new place, he takes stock of the past fifteen years: his struggles with addiction, his dreams deferred, his failures that loom so much larger than his successes. He tells the mortgage broker that his condo is more like King Tut's tomb: a place to fill with shit until he dies. This makes the mortgage broker cry.

For Bucky, it's not sad. It's a pathway to having character. In Bucky's poem, he develops character by being a brilliant writer whose work has been all-but ignored. But the work is serious. It's meaningful. In a Pac Man world, he may not get a high score, but he found a significance in the maze. For the narrator of "Blue Ghosts," character is found by turning and facing the ghosts that chase you. We all have them. They'll always be there. The moment of grace comes right after we deal with them, when their little eyes float away.

—Sean Carswell





# LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"We're all  
going to die.  
I accept that."**

## Extreme Measures for a Pretty Good Life

I found them on Craigslist.

Folding chairs. Five dollars each. I replied to the ad.

"How many you got?"

"As many as you want," a guy named Raffi wrote back.

"Can I come take a look?"

He sent me an address in Hollywood and I drove over after work. Traffic was worse than usual. It was Halloween and everyone had someplace important to go.

I turned off Hollywood Boulevard but I couldn't find the address. There was a church where the house was supposed to be. St. Garabed Armenian Apostolic Church. I drove by it twice before it dawned on me that it made perfect sense for a church to have a shitload of folding chairs for sale.

I pulled into the parking lot and an Armenian man waved me over.

Raffi, I presumed.

He thanked me for coming and showed me the chairs.

The chairs were fine. I told him I'd take them.

"How many?"

As many as I can squeeze into my little Pepsi can of a car, a 2002 Volkswagen Golf hatchback with 233,000 miles.

Turns out you can fit a shitload of chairs in the back of a VW. I had to stop at twenty because I only had a hundred dollars on me. We went inside the church. Raffi wrote me a receipt. He tried to sell me some raggedy-ass stackable chairs with torn seat cushions. I told him I wasn't interested.

I pulled out of the parking lot. The chairs made a hell of a racket in the back of the car. I rattled my way down the boulevard like an old jalopy.

Then the engine light came on. It was more than the chairs. The whole car was shaking and I was losing power.

I pulled into a gas station with a garage that was still open. A bunch of old Armenians stood around eating strange fruit out of a box. The mechanic was burly and friendly. He had huge hands. You would think large hands would be a liability when working on cars, but every Armenian mechanic I have ever known has had unusually large hands.

You can always trust an Armenian mechanic. This one's name was Sergei.

He put on a stethoscope and listened to the engine. He told me the Golf wasn't firing on all cylinders.

"Maybe spark plug," he said with a shrug. "Probably coil, but maybe engine."

"When can you look at it?" I asked.

"Maybe tomorrow."

Maybe wasn't going to work. Maybe Friday meant probably Monday. I work in Los Angeles and live in San Diego and I needed to get home.

I called AAA. I pay out the nose for Premier membership for situations like these. They said they would send a driver. It was rush hour on Halloween. This was going to take a while.

I sat in my car and watched people pull up for gas and jump out of their vehicles in costumes. This is going to surprise you, but I saw a lot of zombies and a lot of more-than-partial nudity.

I went inside to get something to drink. As I looked around, a woman brought her four kids into the station to trick or treat. The guy behind the counter was baffled and sent them away. I felt bad. I wanted to buy something for the trick-or-treaters, but the only things they had at the counter were Flaming Hot Cheetos and trucker speed.

When the tow truck driver finally showed up, he told me he had to tow me to their yard in Atwater where my car could be put on a flatbed for the long drive to San Diego. I asked him why he didn't just come get me in the flatbed. He didn't really have an answer for that, but I suspected it was because his shift was ending and the graveyard driver was about to take over. He did offer me some candy though, which I declined.

It took us about forty-five minutes to drive from Hollywood to Atwater in northeast L.A. As the skies darkened I started to feel sorry for myself. I didn't have big plans for the evening, but I wasn't exactly looking forward to spending three to five hours in a tow truck. And here we were driving north instead of south, adding more miles to the trip.

We reached the yard and they got my VW up on the flatbed. The new driver was a big, burly Latino named Ernesto with thick forearms and faded ink.

I asked him where he was from. He said he was from South Central. He didn't seem too happy about spending his shift driving to San Diego and back. I started asking him questions about his job. What was your longest trip? (A Lamborghini to San Francisco.) Most annoying customer? (Driving the same pick-up truck to Yuma twice in one week.) Strangest job? (Guy wanted his wrecked vehicle dropped off in his ex-wife's driveway.)

Ernesto sipped his iced tea and started to open up a little, but once he started talking

about his family, he really got going. He had four kids. One in community college and another in high school. Plus, a seven-year-old and a two-year-old. One girl and three boys. As he told me stories about them, something wasn't adding up. He kept referring to the toddler by name and the seven-year-old—Emmanuel—as the baby of the family.

It turns out Emmanuel has special needs. I didn't catch the name of the syndrome he's afflicted with but one of his chromosomes is in the shape of a circle. He can't walk, talk, or take care of himself. Emmanuel wasn't expected to survive infancy. A social worker at the hospital told Ernesto that he should accept the fact that his son was going to die.

"You're going to die," Ernesto told her. "I'm going to die. We're all going to die. I accept that."

The doctors urged Ernesto to put Emmanuel in hospice. In hospice they don't take extreme measures to prolong life. Ernesto recognized this as the death sentence it was and took his son home.

When you leave this hospital, he told the social worker, I want you to call me and tell me where you are, because when Emmanuel turns eighteen we're going to pay you a visit. He got a call shortly after Emmanuel turned five. The social worker wanted to come and see them.

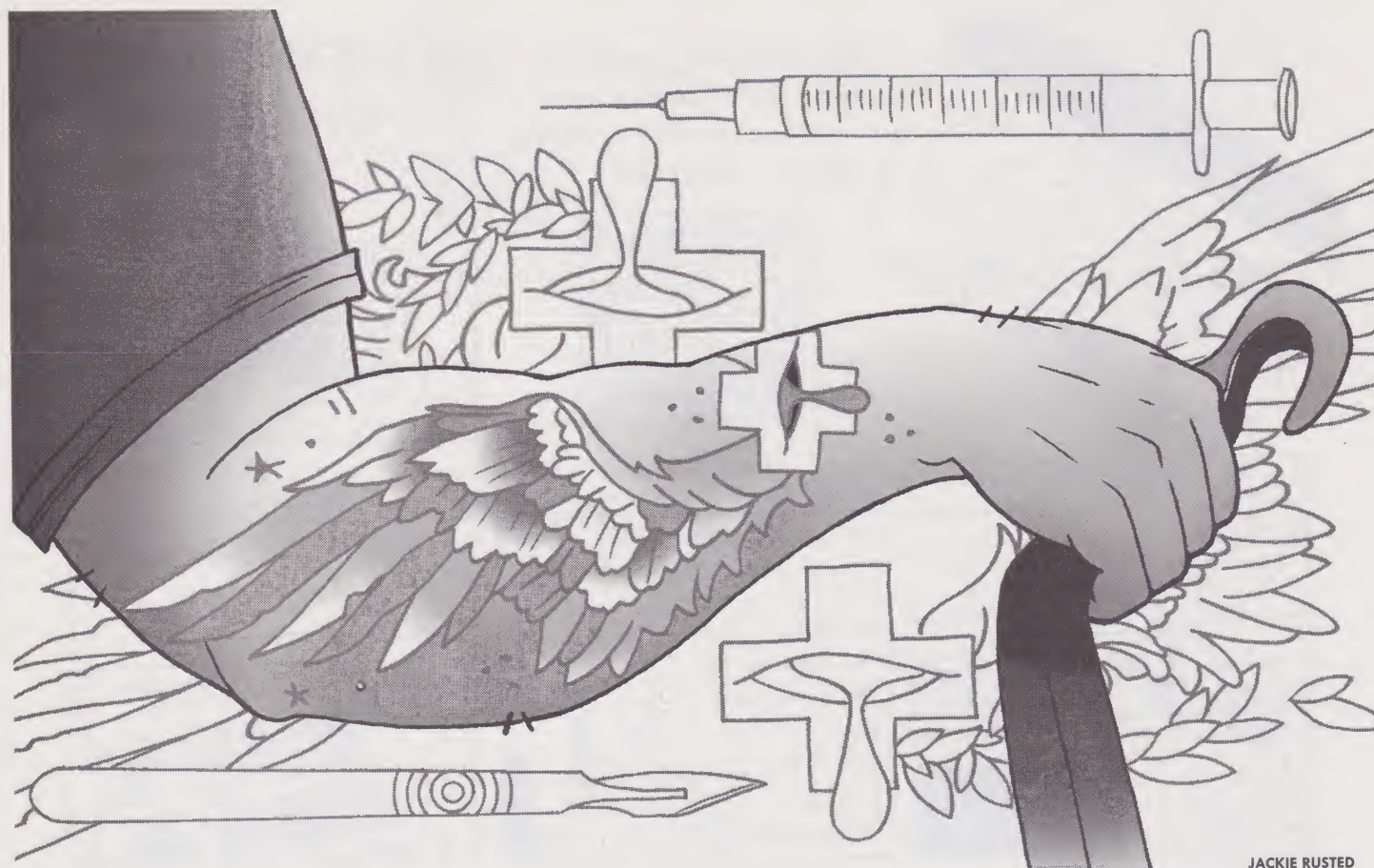
"Sure," Ernesto said, "in thirteen years."

That's the kind of guy Ernesto is. He told me another story about the challenges he faces every time he takes his son to see a doctor. Emmanuel has tiny veins, which makes drawing blood extremely difficult for nurses and nurse practitioners who don't have experience with these kinds of patients.

The problem, Ernesto explained, is that medical professionals don't like to admit there's something they don't know how to do. They seldom hit the vein on the first try, and when they do miss, it can take up to a half-dozen tries before they get it or give up and pass the needle to someone else. All while Emmanuel screams in terror.

In special circumstances, Ernesto will sign a waiver that allows them to cut Emmanuel and collect the blood externally. That's a hard thing for a father to watch.

Not too long ago, an exceptionally stubborn nurse refused to give up and kept poking and prodding Emmanuel even after Ernesto asked her to stop. When he took Emmanuel in his arms, the nurse cut him—without his permission. Ernesto couldn't believe what was happening and pushed



JACKIE RUSTED

I wanted to buy something for the trick-or-treaters, but the only things they had at the counter were Flaming Hot Cheetos and trucker speed.

her away. Security was called and Ernesto was handcuffed.

"I know my rights," he shouted.

Which part of this story is the least surprising? That a medical "professional" fucked up and did more harm than good? That a man from South Central was handcuffed for trying to protect his son? What does it say about our fucked up healthcare and judicial systems that *none* of this is surprising?

Thankfully, this story has a happy ending. Ernesto wasn't charged. The hospital apologized and the nurse was fired.

As the truck rumbled down the freeway and I listened to Ernesto's sadly not-so-shocking stories about the so-called "care" his son had endured, I was struck by his humble commitment to give Emmanuel "a pretty good life."

It all started to click. Emmanuel is the

reason his daughter is studying to be a nurse. Emmanuel is the reason his son wants to be a scientist. Emmanuel is the reason why Ernesto works the graveyard shift as a tow truck driver so that while his wife works during the day he can be home to look after his son.

It became clear to me that in Ernesto's eyes, the only thing special about Emmanuel is that he requires extra protection from those who see him as less of a person. To some, he is a child who will never be normal; but to Ernesto and his family, Emmanuel will always be their baby.

I don't know anything about the kind of person Ernesto was before Emmanuel came into his life, but his love for his son who cannot walk or talk or feed himself is tender and fierce and utterly without compromise—the very best kind of love there is.

When we got to San Diego, Ernesto took

my car to the dealership. We shook hands and I thanked him the ride and for sharing his stories with me, which seemed to embarrass him a little. My wife was waiting and we put the keys in the drop off box and the next day the mechanics called with an estimate. Sergei was right: it was the coil.

They fixed the car and the following Monday I drove the car and its cargo of folding chairs back to L.A. Later that evening I dropped off the chairs.

There were only nineteen.

Those bastards at the church shorted me a chair.

—Jim Ruland



February 1st, 2014 is the 20th anniversary of Green Day's Dookie being released



20 years ago that album changed my life



By the time I came into awareness, they were already controversial



but it was through them that I discovered the small label punk world they had left behind



which got me involved in DIY punk



(where I was excited about local bands)



and introduced me to zines and self-publishing



So far as much as Green Day sold out, I bought in



SO THANK YOU, GREEN DAY, for introducing us kids who weren't blessed with cool older siblings, or who grew up in the middle of nowhere, to the contradictions, hypocrisies, petty rivalries, and idiosyncrasies of PUNK



I'll always be an Idiot



## Shanty Cheryl's Photo Page

Spider Problem at the Echo Curio, Los Angeles

# ALTERNATIVE NEW FLAVORS

# TENTACLES FOR 2014

**PEACE CREEP**  
s/t debut 12"

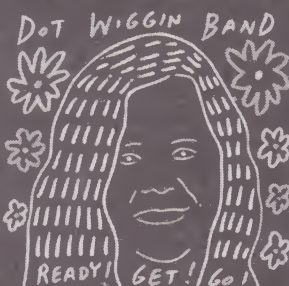


**ANI KYD**  
Entangle digital EP



DEATH HYMN NUMBER 9 JUCIER PINS OF LIGHT

**ON TOUR! DOT WIGGIN BAND & ULTRA BIDE**



**ULTRA  
BIDE**  
DNA vs DNA - C



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JELLO BIATRA & THE GUANTANAMO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

check our website for tour dates!!!

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WHITE MURDER  
COMING SOON

**JOEL RL PHELPS  
& THE DOWNER TRIO**  
Gala LP



**BURNT SKULL**  
Sewer Birth LP

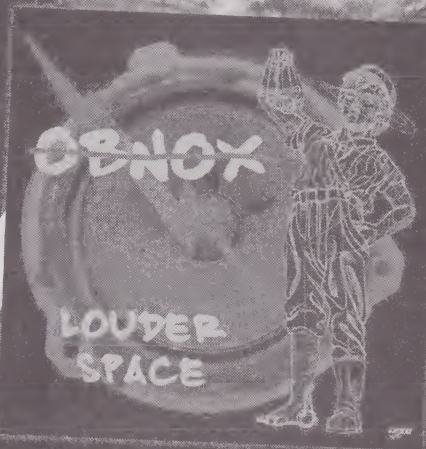
BURNT SKULL SEWER BIRTH

Sweet Talk



**SWEET TALK**  
Flash of Light 12" EP

**OBNOX**  
Louder Space LP



later in 2014: new stuff from **Ghetto Ghouls,**  
**The Gotobeds, The Dead Space and The Gospel Truth**

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MY SIXTY-SECOND COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

SOMETIMES PEOPLE ASK  
WHERE I GOT THE NAME  
**SNAKE PIT?**

IT WAS THE NAME OF THE  
PUNKHOUSE I LIVED IN  
BACK IN RICHMOND, VA  
BEFORE I MOVED TO AUSTIN.



IT WAS A 2ND FLOOR FLAT  
IN A CRUMMY NEIGHBORHOOD  
NEXT TO A HALFWAY HOUSE.



NOBODY THAT LIVED THERE  
HAD THEIR NAME ON THE  
LEASE, THE LANDLORD WAS  
KIND OF A SPAZZ...



BUT HE WAS PRETTY COOL.

YOU GUYS BONGIN'  
IT UP?

UH, YEAH.

LEMME HAVE  
SOME.



ONCE DURING A PARTY,  
SOMEBODY RIPPED THE  
BATHROOM SINK OUT OF  
THE WALL.

YEEEAHH



THE LANDLORD WAS  
SURPRISINGLY CHILL  
ABOUT IT.

IT'S NOT LIKE I  
HAVEN'T RIPPED A  
FEW SINKS OUTTA  
WALLS IN MY DAY.



DURING MY TIME THERE,  
I LIVED IN 2 DIFFERENT  
ROOMS. ONE WAS A "NORMAL"  
BEDROOM...



THE OTHER WAS AN OLD  
LAUNDRY ROOM WITH A  
BROKEN WINDOW. I PUT  
MY MATTRESS OVER THE  
HOLE IN THE FLOOR.



THE HOUSE GOT ROBBED  
A COUPLE OF TIMES. ONCE  
WE FOUND A BUM SLEEPING  
ON THE COUCH.

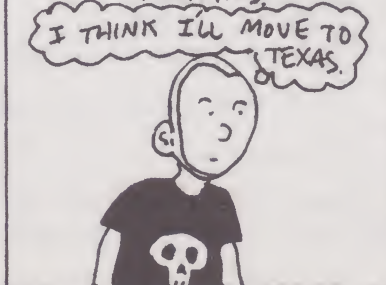


AND ONCE, WHEN NOBODY  
WAS HOME, SOMEBODY  
SMASHED ALL OUR WINDOWS  
OUT WITH A HAMMER.



WE EVENTUALLY GOT  
KICKED OUT FOR NOT  
PAYING RENT FOR THREE  
MONTHS.

I THINK I'LL MOVE TO  
TEXAS.



I'M GLAD I TOOK THE  
NAME WITH ME (AND  
THE SIGN OVER THE DOOR)  
IT WILL ALWAYS REMIND  
ME OF THE GOOD TIMES  
AND GOOD FRIENDS I HAD  
BACK IN MY HOMETOWN.

ACTUALLY. IT SUCKED  
THERE. I'M GLAD I  
LEFT.





HERE COMES  
SUCCESS!

CASSIE J SNEIDER

“Scenic  
hopelessness.”

# Blood Money

Everyone who worked at the IHOP on Cesar Chavez was a tweaker. No matter which waiter we got, they fucked up our order and hovered around us, asking what we were doing in fast, awkward small talk. We continued to go there every night for the air conditioning while I tried to finish a comic and Laura worked on writing a television show about all the crappy jobs we'd had. Our mutual level of abject poverty and Adderall-like intensity for what we were working on left us spending long bricks of time in silence with each other, accepting refill after refill of watery coffee.

Laura looked up from her laptop. “What else is there to do?”

“Get the check?” I said, freehanding a picture of myself.

“No, like, *for money*.”

“Oh, I don't know. We've done pretty much everything.”

“How are we gonna afford to drive to Denver?” In one week, we were supposed to drive eighteen hours to see the Dwarves in Denver. This was on the night a giant particle collider was supposed to start up in Switzerland, potentially generating a black hole that could suck in the whole world. We would either survive to go back to our jobs as stripper and writer of college papers for rich kids, or we would die in a *Total Recall* death scene in the name of our favorite band.

Our waiter shot out of nowhere, scratching his arms. His pupils were more blown out than Garfield's at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. “More coffee?”

“No, thanks. Just the check.” Laura went for her credit card at the same time I did.

“No, madam. Allow me.” I produced a Visa from my back pocket. We called this game Poverty Chicken. Neither of us had any actual money, so we shared the burden of our destitution by running our credit into the ground like someone throwing a javelin into a cesspool.

Our waiter disappeared into the kitchen, and we sipped what was left of our coffee awaiting his return.

“I've got it! We can sell our blood!”

“Wait,” Laura put down the crust of her toast. “You can do that? Like, that's something you can actually do?”

“Well, I dunno. Isn't there an episode of *The Simpsons* where Bart sells his blood?” Our waiter came back. I put my signature on the receipt, dotting the i's

with flourish. “Eat up, little lady. You're gonna need your strength to make more hemoglobin tomorrow.”

\* \*

When Laura got in the car, I handed her my cup. The gas station down the street from my house had forty-four ounce Styrofoam cups I filled with coffee every morning. I drank about four a day, which works out to 176 fluid ounces of coffee at ninety nine cents a hit. Laura's eating habits were no better than mine, but also included bags full of dried, sulfurous pineapple from the corner bodega. Our malnutrition was starting to make everything look like the desert scene in a drag race movie where steam is coming up off of the pavement and a rolling car-fire goes careening off a cliff.

“Coffee?” she asked, fastening her belt.

“You know it.”

The blood bank was a brick building camouflaged by an organic food store and a couple of hippie burrito places. This seemed like a classier kind of joint than I expected, not like the one my memory recalled from *The Simpsons* episode. Laura and I approached the reception area, trying to look respectable by smiling. There were two women behind the counter. One labeled manila envelopes while the other ate rice out of a white take-out container.

“Hi,” I said.

“Hi,” the one eating rice said. “How may I help you today?”

“We're looking to give some blood.”

“Oh, well, you just fill out these forms, then hand them back over here and Nancy will get you started with the donation procedure.”

I looked at Laura. This all seemed too good to be true. “Um, like, how much do you get?”

“Well, the standard donation size is about a pint.”

“Oh, I meant, like, how much do you *make*?”

Ricelady rolled her eyes while Manila File Folder lady snatched back the clipboard. “This isn't *that* sort of facility.”

Laura shrugged her shoulders. “I'm sorry. We're new here. Where *do* we find *that* sort of facility?”

Manila File wouldn't even look at us. Rice lady reluctantly told us where to go, and Laura and I got back in the car.

“Well,” I said, sipping from my forty-four ounce cup, “we're hot on the trail!”

“Did you see the way she scowled at us?”

“Which one? They both thought we were dirtbags.” We fastened our seatbelts and drove to the other side of Airport Boulevard, over the train tracks into a nest of injury attorneys and convenience stores. Laura and I usually took this way when I dropped her off at the strip club. We were familiar with the scenic hopelessness.

Laura and I parked the car and got out, and the smell hanging over the plasma donation center was stifling. It was a mix of humidity, bad psychic energy, and medical waste. Laura covered her mouth. “This is terrible. I hope it's worth it.”

The willingness to sell your body, or at least replenish-able parts thereof, is a great equalizer, and we waited in line with hard-luck mothers, crackheads, and normal-looking people. I turned around to the young couple behind us. “What are you guys gonna do with your blood money?”

“We're gonna go to the movies,” the male half said. “How about you guys?”

“We're gonna buy drugs... HAHA! Just kidding. We're driving to Colorado to see our favorite band.”

“Cool!” the girl said and the boyfriend nodded in agreement. We exchanged pleasantries until Laura was summoned to the counter and realized she had left her I.D. at home. She took my keys and went to go get her wallet while I filled out my forms. There was a weird selection of magazines to leaf through while I waited for my name to be called for the mandatory AIDS and hepatitis testing: *The Economist*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, as though anyone there was going to use their earnings for an IRA or to buy new curtains.

The AIDS test results came back in about two minutes. It really doesn't matter how safe or celibate you are, those two minutes always drudge up the turning point in a thousand *Lifetime* movies, where shit goes from bad to teen-learns-a-life-lesson-worse. I stared at the stick dotted with my blood where it sat under a loudly ticking clock and a calendar of dachshund puppies in a daisy patch. A timer finally sounded and the nurse came back.

“Wouldja look at that!” she said, dyed-red perm bobbing with enthusiasm. “You're clean! On to the next round!”



MARCOS SIREF

## The willingness to sell your body, or at least replenish-able parts thereof, is a great equalizer.

Donating plasma takes forever. The next round was a pee test, then more blood samples, then I was called up for the actual donation. My veins are usually pretty visible, like, in a *Cryptkeeper Takes a Trip to the Phlebotomist* sort of way, but the girl who was hooking me up to the I.V. couldn't get it right. She passed me off to someone else after four unsuccessful attempts, but by then, I had a huge purple bruise on my inner elbow.

An indelible scumbag merit badge.

For some reason, it was really cold in the donation room, and the row of pleather lounge chairs all faced a television showing *Maury*, which I would have been watching if I was home anyway. While I sat there with my blood pouring into a machine that sucked all the plasma and nutrients and good ideas out, and then spit it back into my unemployable body, all of the commercials about going back to school and getting Medicaid to pay for a personal mobility scooter really hit home. I was an actual marketing demographic, a blip

on a line graph, someone desperate enough to fake whiplash or reuse a catheter.

"Wow," the nurse said, giving the bag of blood a love tap. Her scrubs had Garfield dressed as a doctor and Odie wearing a humiliating hospital gown. "You're filling up fast!"

"Well, yeah, you know." I was starting to feel a little lightheaded, but I didn't want to let on.

"You're a real trooper. Your friend fainted out there."

"Laura?! No way!" I had been wondering what happened to her.

"Yep. During the finger prick test. Some people just aren't cut out to donate plasma. *You*, on the other hand." She looked at the rapidly-filling pint bag.

"It's a gift," I said.

When I was done, I collected my money at the counter. In the lobby, I found Laura reading *Forbes*.

"I fainted!" she said, proud and embarrassed.

"Dude, I know! What happened?"

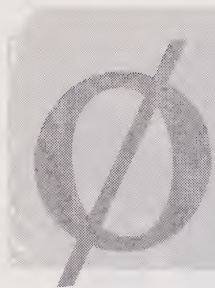
"Oh, the diet of gas station coffee and dried pineapple. How was it? How are you?"

"I feel a little tired." It was an intentional understatement. I felt like I just fought a shark and lost, but I had already made the mistake of saying I felt a little weak because I thought they might give me apple juice or some crackers. Instead, they just made me sit in the cold pleather recliner watching a court show for an extra fifteen minutes. We pushed past the doors and out to the waiting Toyota.

"How much did you make?"

"Forty-five dollars. Dinner's on me. The rest goes to the trip." Laura had the keys, and she knew where to take us anyway, so I rode shotgun in my own car. The sun went down over the crappy side of Austin, and the blue awning of the IHOP on Cesar Chavez had an orange halo as we pulled into the parking lot.

—Cassie J. Snider



# AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NØRB

**“Ink technician  
at a printing  
plant.”**

## FOR THE WORLD IS HOLLOW AND I HAVE TOUCHED THE PAINTER'S PANTS

America is kind of a screwy country. The guys at the VA Hospital think the notion of socialized medicine is un-American, and the guys who get paid time-and-a-half for overtime think labor unions are communist bunk. Don't ask me, I just work here. This, thus, is my plight: For the first time in two years of ((admittedly, often half-hearted)) job searching, I have landed a full-time job: Ink technician at a printing plant. YES! THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S TIME FOR ADDITIONAL UNWANTED INSIGHT INTO REV. NØRB'S ONGOING CARNIVAL OF VOCATIONAL WHIMSY!!! We print labels for cheese packages, labels for juice bottles, labels for deodorant and wine bottles and fish tank stuff ((“To Label Is to Limit” said Bored Youth circa 1981, but they were from Canada, thus cannot possibly understand the plight of the American working man, soft and weak as they are from access to decent healthcare. BRING BACK STYX. ONLY TOMMY SHAW CAN POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THESE LONG NIGHTS AND IMPOSSIBLE ODDS!!!)). I wear safety glasses and steel-toed shoes, like a common soccer hooligan. I also have nine work shirts with “Norbert” on a patch over the pocket, which makes me feel like the next generation of meta-ironic emo hipsters. After a few pints of cider, my steel toed boots sing Blitz songs and stomp all over my emo workshirts and I go to work dusty and confused. It's a living ((I'm looking into having some flaming dice tattoos issued to me as well, for maximum spiritual confusion)). I have no idea why they hired me for this job. Of all the jobs in the world for which I could be possibly qualified, this seems like a kooky choice. Do I seem like the kind of guy who excels in environments where solvent-soaked rags are plentiful? ((If you're wondering what to get me for Christmas, I decided I don't really dig solvents all that much. They smell like the kind of thing one would use to konk a snooping reporter back in the days of Jimmy Cagney and Lois Lane)). I also have nine pairs of work pants; utterly horrific blue denim painter's pants things. IF THE SEVENTIES COME BACK, WE'RE GONNA BE PREPARED AS SHIT!!! TURBONEGRO SWADDLING CLOTHES!!! And, while I realize that tight jeans probably aren't the wisest of dry goods choices in a job that involves a lot of bending, stooping, and konking, these pants are so

ungodly huge they make me feel like I got half a Jo-Ann Fabrics® dangling off my beltline. There's so much denim floating around down there I can't find my legs. Kinda like Ronald Reagan after that unnecessary amputation in the movie *Kings Row*! Sometimes, I explore the perverse hugeness of these pants by trying to see how far I can wiggle my leg inside of them without contacting denim, kinda like *Operation* but with a different nose. Clearly I am the right person for this job. Properly outfitted in my “Norbert” workshirt and Cock Sparrer boots and protective eyewear and forty-two bolts of denim, I work a ten-hour shift, Monday thru Thursday. Ten hour shifts are AWESOME—not because you get Friday off, but because every six minutes that elapses is one percent of your workday gone, making keeping a running tally of your time completed a breeze. *Three percent gone???* Life sucks!!! *Fourteen percent???* How did I get myself into this mess?! *Thirty-seven percent???* Things are looking up! *Fifty-five percent???* Whoop, time for lunch!!! The math on an eight-hour shift is much less elegant, because it doesn't break down any more neatly than five percent of your shift elapsing every twenty-four minutes. I AM A BUSY MAN AND I DON'T HAVE TIME TO COUNT DOWN THE DURATION OF MY SHIFT IN FIVE PERCENT INCREMENTS!!! So, yes. I walk around in curious attire, mixing printer's ink and pushing carts of cylinders hither and yon, whilst counting down my life in six-minute chunks. My co-workers like hunting. My co-workers hate liberals. I am unsure if my co-workers like or dislike anything else. They think Obama is a moose-lim, secretly pledged to destroy our fair nation ((presumably at the behest of his liberal Moosylvanian overlords)). They think the POTUS wants “death panels” to judge the living and the dead, and that the government is using hi-tech satellites to look inside their safes at home to determine how much money they've got socked away ((cash presumably earmarked to fund an armed insurrection of some sort, and/or buy more camouflage hats and beef jerky)). They view themselves as America's last and most heavily armed line of defense against this MAD CRAZY RADICALMOOSE-LIMCONSTITUTION-DESTROYING PRESIDENT!!! I find it somewhat amusing that, given the vast litany

of Constitution-destroying activities engaged in by the this administration—or any other administration over the course of the last two centuries—the one intolerable item that's just going to lead these guys to the brink of armed revolt is gonna be *health insurance*. HEALTH INSURANCE??? WHAT??? IT'S AN OUTRAGE I TELL YOU!!! *RIOT!!! RIOT IN THE STREETS!!! RIOT RIGHT NOW!!! IT'S A MAAAADHOUSE!!!* Like, everything else up to now was fine, but this health insurance stuff, NO SIR, WE JUST WON'T HAVE IT!!! WE WON'T HAVE IT I SAY!!! IT'S NONSENSE UP WITH WHICH WE WILL NOT PUT!!! *HE HATES THESE CANS!!!* Most of the people I work with are around my age. They make way more money than I make, because instead of being a dumbass like yours truly and going to college a few times and getting a couple of degrees and THEN winding up printing labels for Algae-B-Gone®, they skipped the interceding steps and started printing labels for Algae-B-Gone® right off the bat, so now they have twenty years of experience, and I'm just some noob dodo who can't remember if a snooping reporter is best konked with a rag full of acetate or one full of n-Propyl alcohol. As a rule, frequent and intimate contact with solvent-soaked rags is generally not seen as indicative of good life choices. However, I'll make an exception for myself today, *because I told that nosy reporter to keep her schnozz out of this, ergo my life choices are clearly beyond reproach!* I work in a full-on blue-collar Joe environment, with up to six flexographic presses running at one time. Ear protection is required. *Hey, free earplugs!* And, of course—as the cherry on the top of this most excellent sundae of success and fulfillment—over the din of a plant full of presses lilts the majestic strain of Northeastern Wisconsin's numero uno rock radio station, The Rockin' Asshole. *The radio station to which people with earplugs in listen to when people with earplugs in listen to radio stations!* I used to have to listen to the Rockin' Asshole about twenty years ago, at my old job. Curiously, the playlist has not changed since then. Boston have never left heavy rotation, Van Halen get played about once an hour, and everything either sounds like “Back in Black” by AC/DC or *is* “Back in Black” by AC/DC. It's fucking mind-boggling in its anachronisticness, like a petrified forest. It's like the station decided



ALEX BARRETT

## As a rule, frequent and intimate contact with solvent-soaked rags is generally not seen as indicative of good life choices.

everything after Pearl Jam was just too fucking weird and they couldn't hang with it, so they just kept the same playlist for twenty-odd years. It's legitimately bizarre. You can't even really hear it half the time, just every four minutes or so I hear a "QUEE!" cutting thru the din when some permed hot dog launches into another solo. I must also warn you that the sound press #12 makes is easily confused with "Heartache Tonight" by the Eagles. I used to listen to the Rockin' Asshole after school when I was thirteen; it's the first place I heard bands like Elvis Costello, Blondie, and the Fabulous Poodles. They also had a weekly punk show around 1980, which is the first place I heard the Rezillos, DMZ, and Radio Birdman. I guess that's what they used to call the "AOR" radio format—"Album Oriented Rock." You had some dudes and they came in and played some songs off some albums and it kinda worked. It wasn't like a free-for-all punk podcast, but there did seem to be a certain tacit allegiance to the health and integrity of, you know, rock'n'roll and that sorta thing. Apparently, AOR was just too baffling a radio format for us acetate-sniffers to have; so some dumb clucks thought up even

stupider radio formats, which, under penalty of armed insurrection, all commercial radio stations seem to wish to adhere. The Rockin' Asshole now follows a format called "Mainstream Rock." From Wikipedia: *"Mainstream rock stations are between classic rock and active rock on the programming spectrum, in that they play more classic rock focusing in on the 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s than active rock stations, but play more Current and Newer Rock than classic rock stations. Mainstream rock is a successor to the widespread album-oriented rock (AOR) format created in the 1970s."* My varnish-pickled brain can't quite pick up on exactly what that means, but I'm pretty sure it means I'm not gonna hear "Mirror Star" at work tomorrow. I mean, it's fucking bizarre: These people are in their forties and fifties and listen to the EXACT SAME SHIT they listened to when they were twenty-five. I don't mean "as a part of a balanced Rock Breakfast that spans past, present, and future," I mean EXACT SAME SHIT, period. Fifty-year-old guys listening to "We're Not Gonna Take It" by Twisted Sister, followed by "Hot for Teacher" by Van Halen, EVERY FUCKING DAY OF THEIR LIVES FOR THE LAST

QUARTER CENTURY. It's like, complete generational calcification; music hit a timber line and, for all they know or care, stopped. DESTROY ALL METHODS OF FURTHER PRODUCTION! WE HAVE ALL THE MUSIC WE NEED! NOW TURN ON THE RADIO, I NEED TO HEAR THAT DIRE STRAITS SONG FOR THE FORTY-TWO-THOUSANDTH TIME!!! Seriously, if I ever get to the point where I'm no longer buying new records of any sort, do me a classy solid and stick an acetate-soaked rag over my mouth, then club me with a blackjack and have a guy with cauliflower ears chuck me off a bridge; the world will be a better place for my passing. I was briefly tempted to state that, if nothing else, at least I am not a middle-aged guy listening to "Round and Round" by Ratt of his own volition. Unfortunately, upon further review, I now realize that I am a middle-aged guy listening to "Round and Round" by Ratt of someone ELSE'S volition. I think I'd rather choke to death on someone else's vomit. Pass the acetate, quick!

Love,  
Norb

# COOL STUFF I LEARNED



THIS IS CALLED A SHOVEL

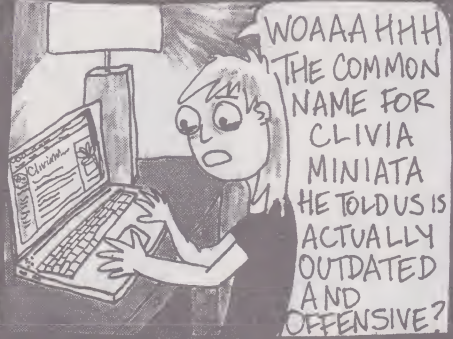
IN MY FIRST SEMESTER IN GARDENING SCHOOL

BY ADRIANCHI

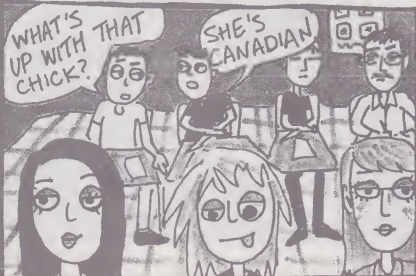
HOW TO IDENTIFY 150 COMMON PLANTS AND DECIPHER LATIN NOMENCLATURE



HOW CRUCIAL IT IS TO DOUBLE CHECK THE STUFF YOUR TEACHER TELLS YOU



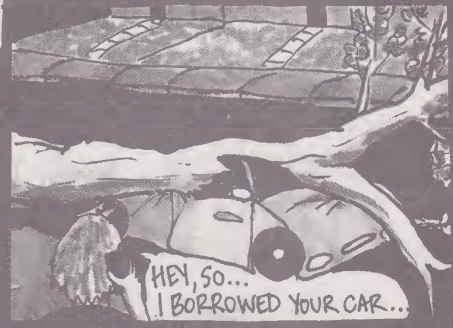
IF YOU TELL PEOPLE YOU'RE FROM CANADA, THEY THINK THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SO WEIRD AND THEY ACTUALLY BOTHER YOU LESS!



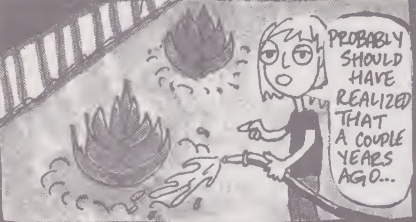
THERE IS AN ONLINE MARKET FOR BUYING AND SELLING RARE AND SOMETIMES ILLEGAL CACTUS PLANTS FOR HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS



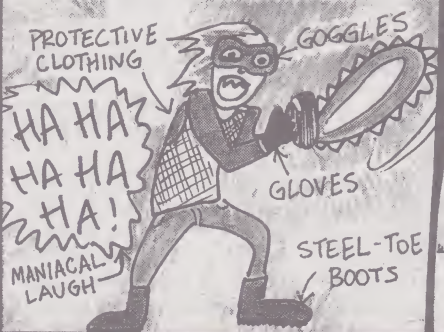
A TREE FALLS ON A CAR EVERY DAY IN LOS ANGELES



DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTS STILL NEED REGULAR DEEP WATERING FOR THE FIRST COUPLE OF YEARS



HOW TO USE A CHAINSAW!

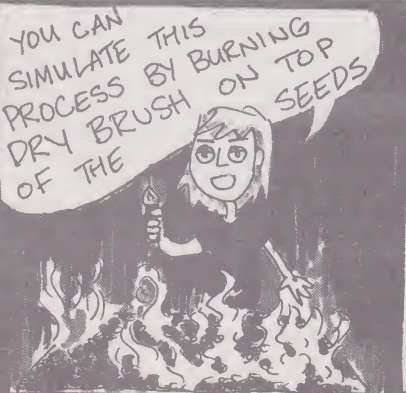


TURF GRASS WILL NEVER FULLY DISAPPEAR - NO MATTER HOW POINTLESS AND WASTE FUL.



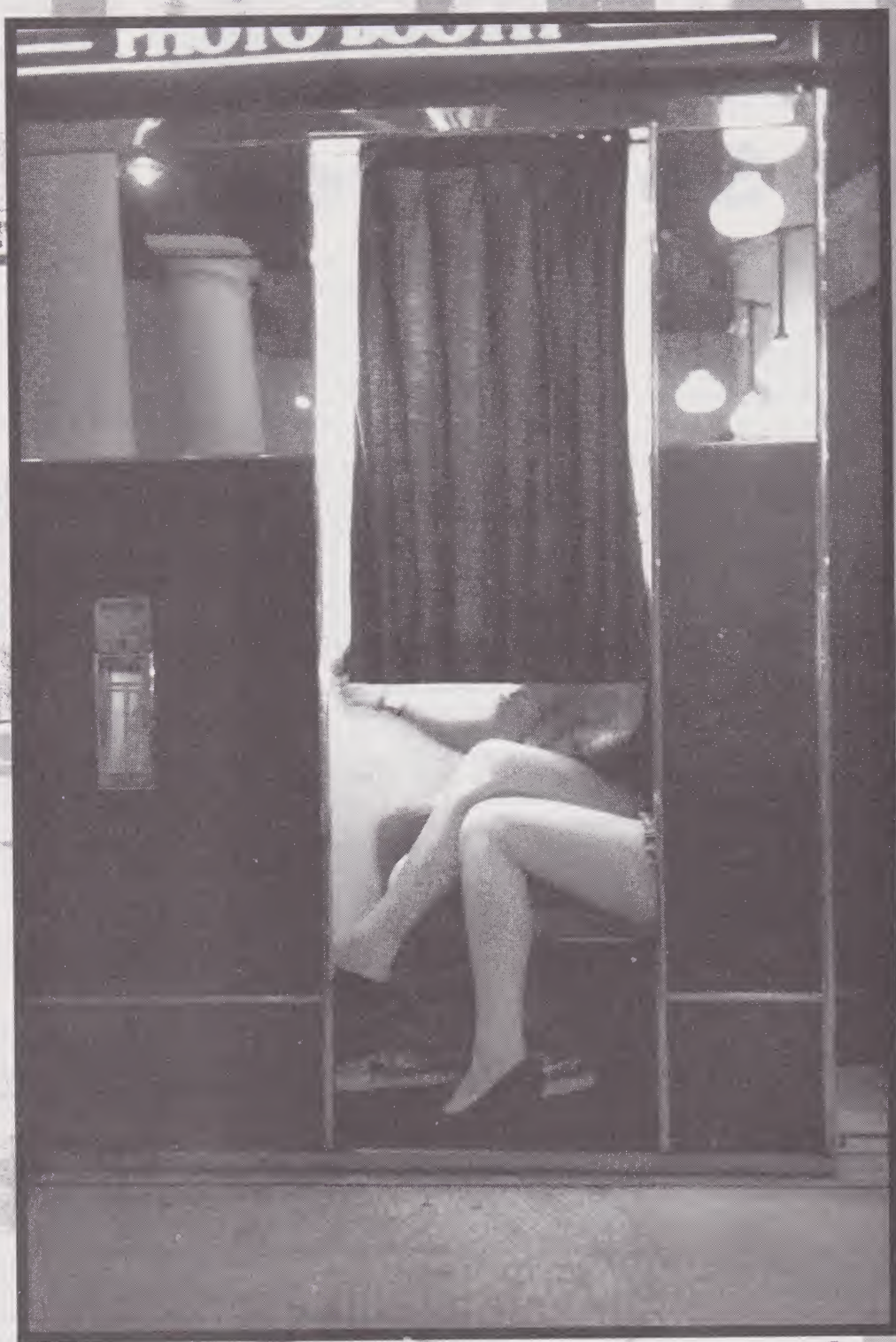
UNTIL THEIR ROOTS ARE ESTABLISHED

SOME PLANTS (LIKE REDWOODS) RELY ON WILDFIRES TO SEED



AND FINALLY... A PROFESSIONAL ARBORIST TOLD ME ABOUT A CONSPIRACY THEORY WHERE TEN YEARS AGO, MILLIONS OF TREES WERE DYING FROM AN INSECT INFESTATION. THE GOVERNMENT FOUND A BUG THAT WOULD KILL THE FIRST BUG, AND IN ORDER TO DISPERSE IT EFFICIENTLY ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, THEY RELEASED IT





**Dan Monick's Photo Page**  
New York, 10/13



**“Money creates stress. I don’t like stress. I like beer.”**

# Just Some Dork

I started a small business almost three years ago. Needless to say, this has taken up about 110 percent of my time. I think back to the simpler days when I just worked for three other employers at once. Even though I was punching in time cards at one full-time gig and two part-time ones, I still had that amazing little perk of free time. In those days I would punch out my time card, walk away, and miraculously leave work behind until my next shift. Nowadays, even though I’m not physically at work, I’m always at work. Don’t get me wrong, I chose this life and I’m not complaining one bit. The real miracle, however, is that I still get to be a Rhythm Chicken.

Lately, I’ve been observing friends who play in bands. They play local shows. They play out-of-town shows. They go on tour. They go on tour overseas. They have band practices. They record albums. I, too, used to do these things quite a few years ago in my previous human life. There are times when I really miss those things, and there are times I do not. Lately, more than ever, I’ve been really happy as a Rhythm Chicken. Were I still a Milwaukeean, I would say I’m happy as a clam in shit! This leads us to my topic of discussion this time around... **THE RHYTHM CHICKEN’S TOP FIVE FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT BEING A RHYTHM CHICKEN!**

**Thing #1: A Rhythm Chicken never really practices!** Seriously, I cannot remember the last time I actually set up my drums and played them alone in the name of “practice.” The thought of doing such a thing just seems so... lame! I guess I was an okay drummer at one point in my previous human life, but now I happily and proudly admit that I SUCK AS A DRUMMER! I mean, c’mon! I DON’T PLAY SONGS! I just play really dorky drumbeats and try my hardest to make a complete visual ass of myself! I usually end up playing the same stupid, generic beat and just concentrating on creating a maximum visual embarrassment. I never really “mess up,” for I have no real set songs to mess up! Whatever I play, no matter how sloppy or drunken it may be, THAT is the show! Seeing as how I really don’t have the time to practice anyway, this fits well into my schedule.

**Thing #2: A Rhythm Chicken has no need for a high quality drum set!** I’ve been playing the same blue sparkly kit I bought

for seventy-five dollars in 1997. It is literally a generic no-name kit. The salesman at the Green Bay drum shop told me it would suffice as a “beater kit.” Sixteen years later, I am still trying my hardest to beat the living CRAP out of this thing, and IT WON’T DIE! I wrestle it! I beat it with the Ruckus Logs! I throw it around, drop it, smash it up, pound on it, mosh it, and abuse it in ways that make other drummers gasp! After some gigs I will mercilessly throw its smoldering remains into my car, kicking and stomping on it to make it fit before slamming the trunk down with a CRUNCH! I’m always amazed that it never takes more than twenty minutes or so with a simple tool kit to bring the hideous thing back to life. **ARISE, FRANKENDRUMS, ARIIIIIIISE!!!**

**Thing #3: A Rhythm Chicken only plays when he (or she?) wants to!** If I don’t feel like playing for a year at a time, I DON’T PLAY. There have been many times where my drums are out in the car while I’m at an amazing show/event and it seems like the perfect time for a Chicken gig and people are trying to help me carry the drums in... and I just don’t feel like playing. No show. Sorry. Hey, I wasn’t on the bill! I signed no contract! An actual “scheduled” Chicken gig is a very rare thing, and even then it’s tempting to just not play.

Other times, a Chicken gig seems like the worst possible idea... **AND I SIMPLY CANNOT RESIST MYSELF! I MUST PLAY!** I mean, any single gig from now on could literally be my last, or could just be the next in a loooooooooong line of annoying gigs ‘til I’m in my grave. Last winter I chose NOT to play at a Night Birds/Tenement show. Twelve years ago I chose to play in an angrily jammed-up Milwaukee parking ramp after a Dixie Chicks concert, just to annoy Dixie Chicks fans. I guess I’m not too invested in becoming a credible underground musician. Oh well, I play when I want.

**Thing #4: A Rhythm Chicken rarely has to deal with money on any level.** I almost never play for money. I don’t really sell merchandise. I’ve never felt that I got “ripped off.” Okay, I did make three hundred copies of my vinyl live 7”, but I gave most of those away. I never sold one sticker. I threw a Rhythm Chicken Bake Sale at a Milwaukee show once, but ended up not selling any cookies and just threw them at the crowd.

I leave the RC T-shirt sales to Razorcake, who I assume is making as much money in that department as I did with my bake sale! Sometimes, I will get so much free beer for playing unrequested at a certain show, that I think I actually made out better than some of the bands scheduled to play! Money creates stress. I don’t like stress. I like beer.

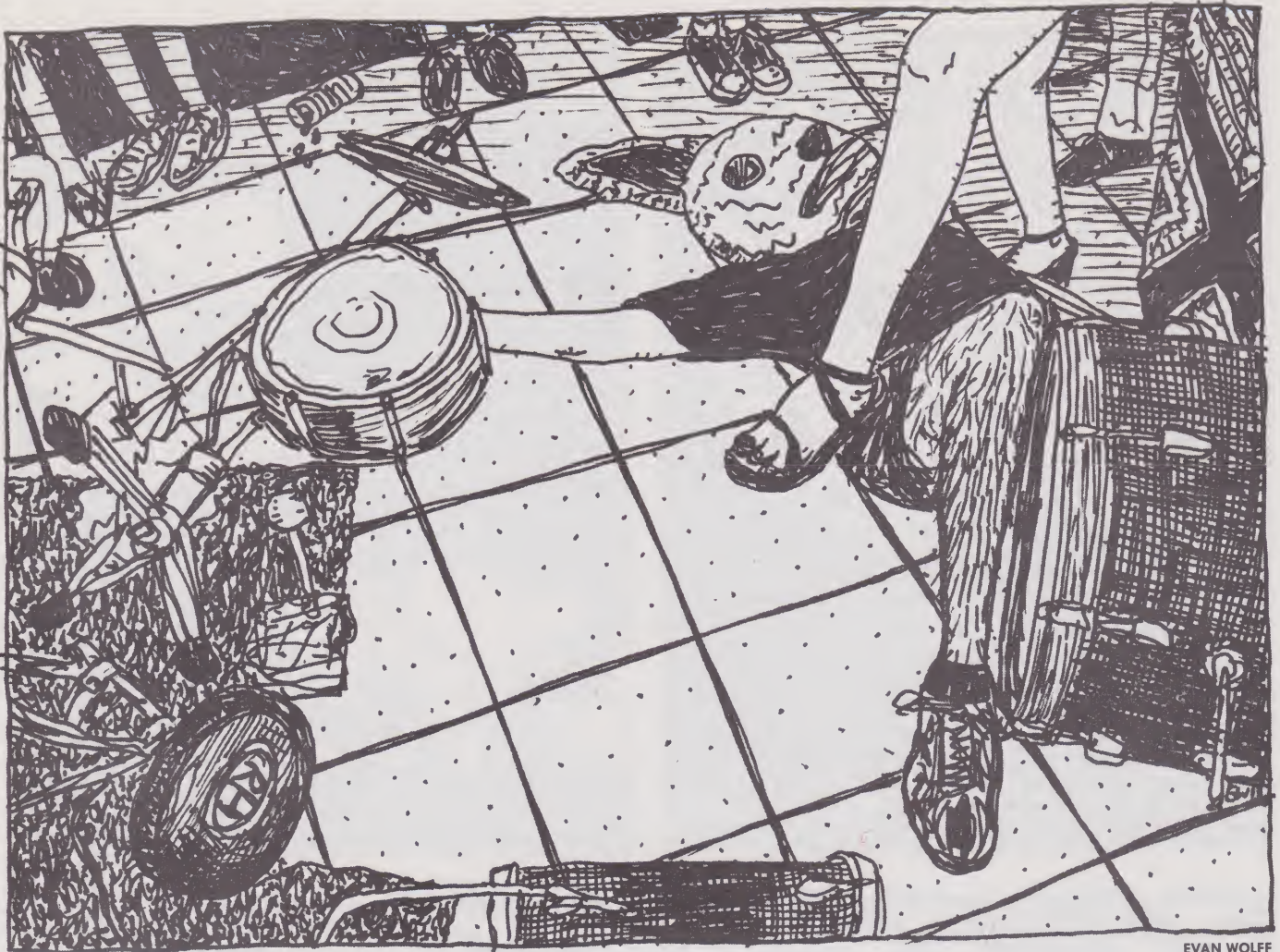
**Thing #5: A Rhythm Chicken is not a band; it’s just some dork.** Bands have to worry about so many things that never cross my mind! Shitty soundman? Loading and unloading the van? Trying to schedule band practice? Dealing with a record label? Shitty club owner? Watching over your quality equipment? Having to tour to support your album? Dealing with bandmates? Staying sober enough to play? Playing your songs correctly, or well at all? Having too short a time slot to play your set? Having too long a time slot to play your set? Having to show up early or late for any specific time slot? No sound check? Even having a sound check? Bickering about order of the bands? Breaking strings? Losing your voice? Monitors? Feedback? **HAVING ELECTRICITY AT ALL?** None of these ever factor into my mission to simply bring the ruckus. Amen.

I hope this makes up for my lack of submitted Top 5 lists lately! And now, back to why we are all here...

## **Dinghole Report #138: Rhythm Ruckus with Kepi and the Italians! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #673)**

It was a Thursday night and I somehow managed to escape my shop for enough hours to take in this show down in Green Bay. Kepi Ghoulie was touring with Miss Chain And The Broken Heels from Italy. The local openers included Green Bay’s Beach Patrol and Madison’s Midwest Beat. My hen and I met up with Ruckus O’Reilly for dinner and drinks before the show. I had not seen Kepi perform since Insubordination Fest in Baltimore in 2009, where his act was voted best of Insub-Fest that year! Anything and everything that Kepi touches simply and magically becomes the most fun and bouncy rock’n’roll experience ever. The guy just bleeds rock’n’roll!

My hen and Ruckus and I showed up early and sat at the Eagles Club bar to



EVAN WOLFF

# The same stupid, generic beat, just concentrating on creating a maximum visual embarrassment.

soak up the cheap-as-dirt drink specials before the show. I relinquished my car keys to the hen and let the barley and hops have their way with me. Both Beach Patrol and Midwest Beat rocked the back room almost to the point of shaking down the posted winners of the recent bingo night! Miss Chain And The Broken Heels were up next. Their Italian version of rock'n'roll was most enjoyable, and strangely similar to American rock'n'roll. Basically, they were fun, awesome, and super nice people. They had me hootin' and hollerin'!

Then, simply because it felt right, my hen and I grabbed my crumbling drums

from the car and threw them together at the back of the room. I pulled on the stinky, graying Chickenhead and tried drumming. As some real drummers might say (or as Wesley Willis once said), my rudiments were.... shall we say.... sloppy. I had a goodly amount of firewater in m'veins. I drummed like an angry mule in quicksand! It wasn't pretty, but I'M A RHYTHM CHICKEN AND THAT STUFF DON'T MATTER!!! People yelled and hilarity ensued! Before I knew it, I was on the floor in a crater left by my own ruckus.

Next thing I remember, Kevi grabs my floor tom and pulls it up on stage

to start pounding out a drum beat with that and his tambourine. Slowly, various members of Miss Chain And The Broken Heels join him on stage as his backup band. The rock'n'roll builds and builds until they are playing Kevi's newest hit, "Rock'n'roll Shark"! The rest of the show was fun beyond words. The remains of my drums have been untouched in the back of my car for the two months since then.

—Rhythm Chicken

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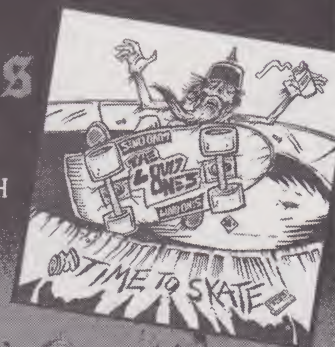
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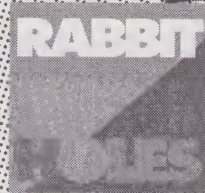


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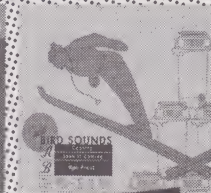
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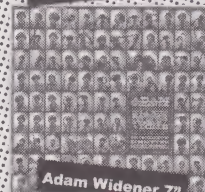
### Torture Pop, Murder Rock Out Now!!



Rabbit Holes 7"



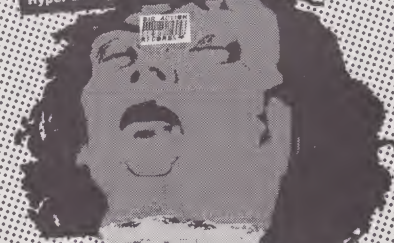
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# CHICO SIMIO

## NO. 41

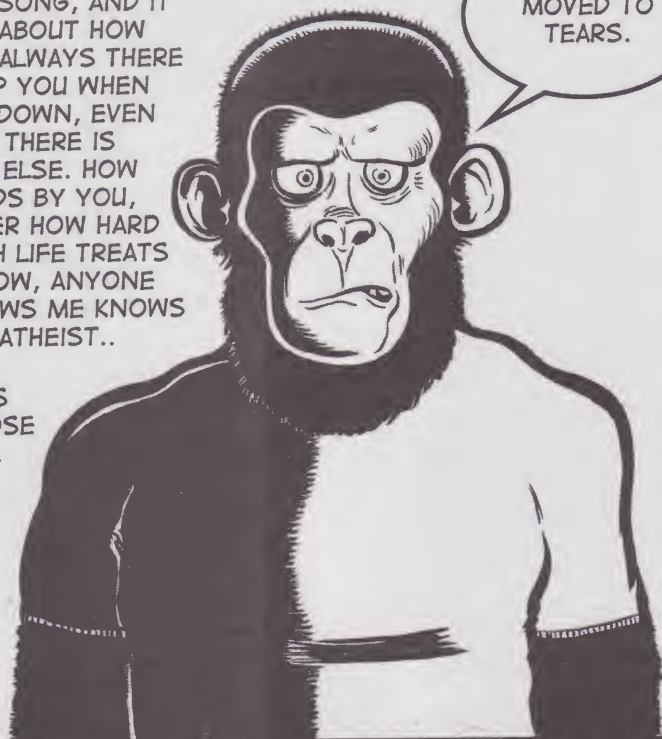
### "TRACK SIX"

I HAD JUST PICKED UP A JOHNNY CASH LP AT MY LOCAL GOODWILL. TRACK #6 ON THIS OLD, BEAT UP ALBUM WAS TO BE A REVELATION FOR ME..



THE SONG IS CALLED "THAT'S ENOUGH". IT'S A GOSPEL SONG, AND IT TALKS ABOUT HOW JESUS IS ALWAYS THERE TO HELP YOU WHEN YOU'RE DOWN, EVEN WHEN THERE IS NOBODY ELSE. HOW HE STANDS BY YOU, NO MATTER HOW HARD OR ROUGH LIFE TREATS YOU. NOW, ANYONE THAT KNOWS ME KNOWS I'M AN ATHEIST..

BUT..THIS SONG..THOSE WORDS..



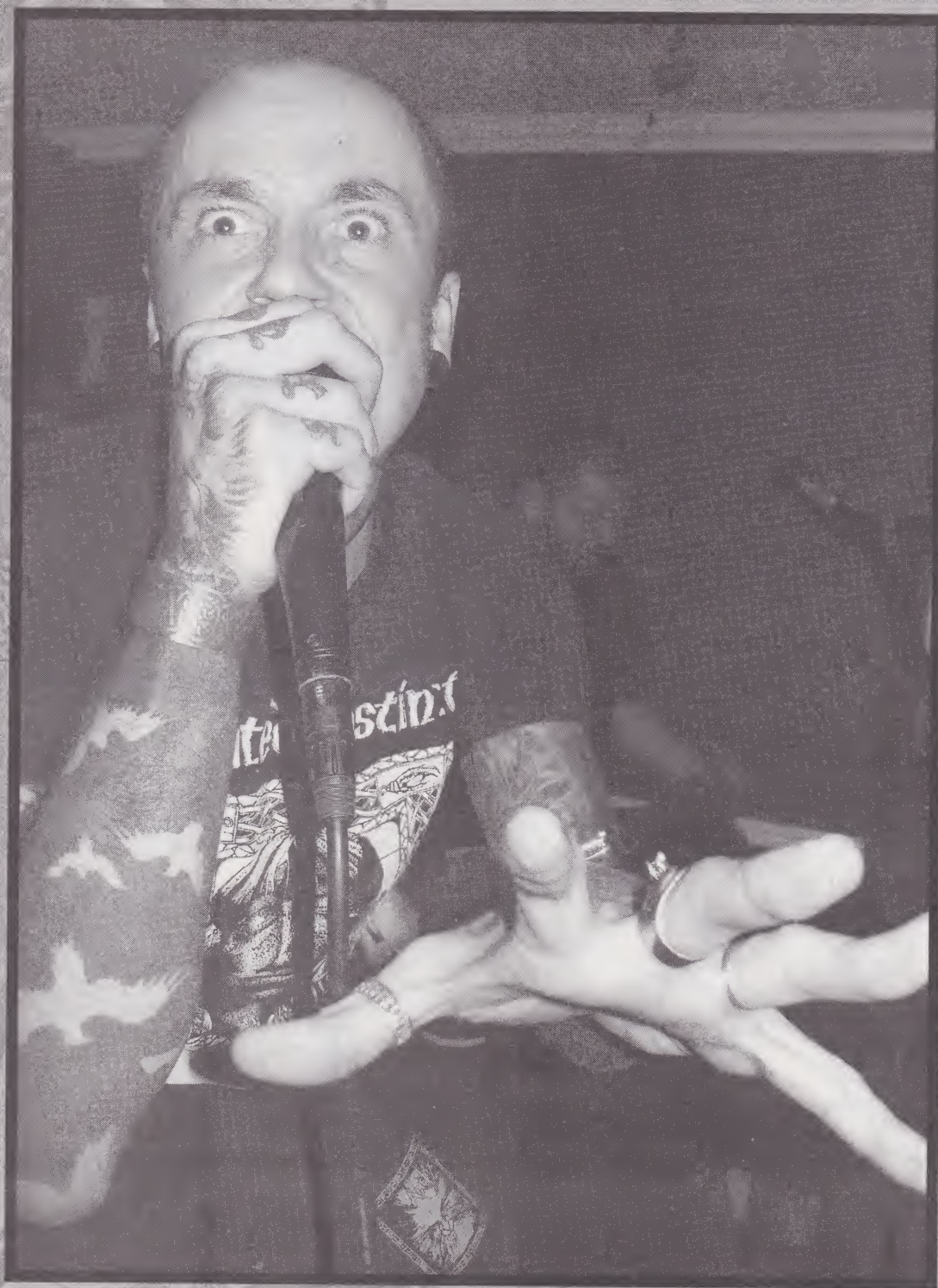
I COULD SEE A GLORIOUS VISION IN MY HEAD OF MY WORRIES AND SORROWS LIFTED FROM ME AND HOW EVERYTHING WOULD BE OK, BECAUSE "I'VE GOT JESUS, AND THAT'S ENOUGH."

TO THIS DAY I LISTEN TO THAT SONG AND BY THE END, I'M ALWAYS IN TEARS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS ABOUT THIS SONG, IT'S YOUR STANDARD GOSPEL SONG. KINDA CHEESY IN ITS CHEERY OUTLOOK. MAYBE IT'S THE WAY JOHNNY CASH SINGS IT. MAYBE IT'S THE MELODY. THE HARMONIES.

WHATEVER IT IS, THIS IS THE ONLY SONG THAT I'VE EVER COME ACROSS THAT ALMOST MAKES ME WANT TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A HIGHER POWER THAT IS THERE TO HELP US.

ALMOST.

THE POWER OF MUSIC NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME.  
LISTEN ON!



## **Matt Average's Photo Page**

See You In Hell, at The Other Place, Anaheim, CA 12/05/13

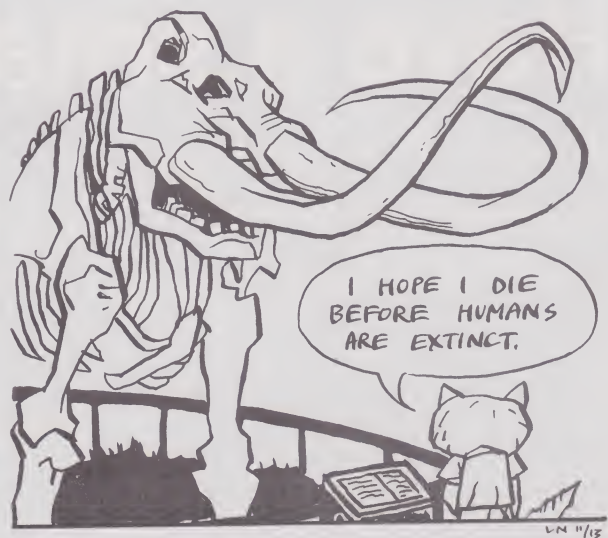
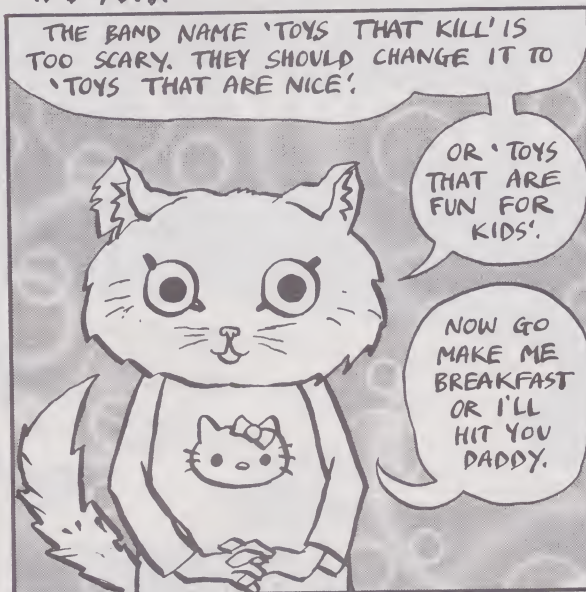
SPECIAL ALL AGES SHOW!!!

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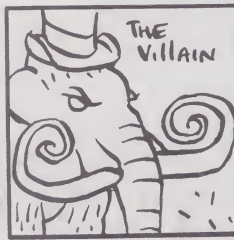
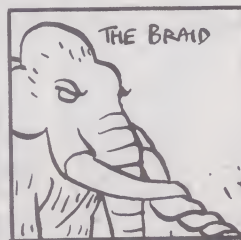
THINGS MY SIX YEAR OLD SAYS  
BY LUCKY NAKAZAWA



WT4NN



BEFORE I BECAME EXTINCT, I WORE MY TUSKS IN DIFFERENT STYLES AS WAS BE-FITTING OF THE PLEOCENE ERA.



KN 11/13

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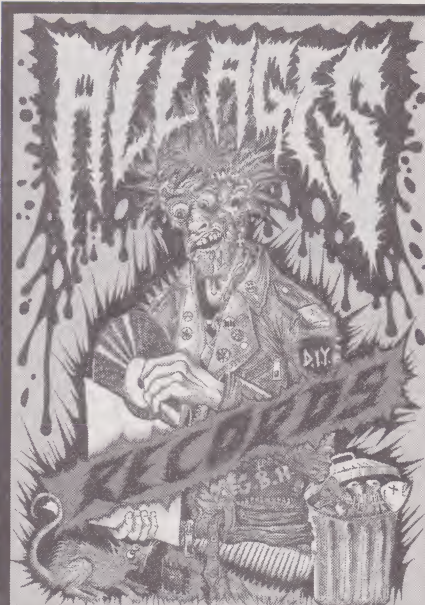
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the group above the waterline for sure. The  
Challenged might get tired of being compared  
to the pop punk classics of the '90s, but they  
flourish within that sound, writing songs that  
I'd like to hear five tracks at a time, while  
driving across town by night with streetlamps  
brushing overhead - thinking about integrity,  
romance, and ambition, all that stuff. But I  
don't have a car. -Jim Joyce, RAZORCAKE-

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## Rachel Murray Framingheddu's Photo Page

The nonprofit group My Dog Is My Home holds service fairs to bring veterinary services to the homeless pets of downtown Los Angeles

I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

**"He took what he thought a rock and roll band should sound like in his mind and played it through that guitar like a weapon..."**

# Johnny and His Blue Mosrite

I've always been one of those people who is fascinated with how some things come into existence, especially with how some seemingly regular people end up becoming some of the most influential artists. After I started getting heavily into music as a kid, it tripped me out to learn how some of the bigger names in the business started out as scrappy street kids, with barely enough change in their pockets to grab a tall boy from the corner liquor store, let alone plunk down for that inevitable guitar strapped on by fate's persistent hands. Some of these kids were fortunate enough to have encouraging parents who scraped together enough cash for a beater guitar or drum set. Some of these kids were a little older and had jobs that afforded 'em this luxury of rock.

By the time this column is printed, it will be close to *forty* years ago to the day that this particular guitar story began: January 23, 1974.

John Cummings (age twenty-five) and friend Douglas Colvin (age twenty-two), friends hailing from the same neighborhood in Forest Hills, Queens, were working at the same building in Manhattan. John worked construction. Douglas worked in the mailroom, where they both hung out during their lunch breaks. They talked about the music they dug and toyed with the idea of starting a band with the repeated insistence of their mutual friend, Thomas Erdelyi (age twenty-one). He had played guitar in a band with John back in high school called Tangerine Puppets. (Don't even begin ask me about that name. It was the '60s, y'know?)

John and Douglas often walked over to Manny's Music on West 48<sup>th</sup> St. to go look at all the guitars. Manny's (RIP) was an institution of a music shop in NYC, especially for guitar players, and anyone who was anyone at the time would stop in there while on tour to make it a point to go and buy a guitar. Those walks over to Manny's made the pipedream of starting a band much more alluring.

John lost his construction gig.

A few days later, John and Douglas walked into Manny's Music and plunked down some cash for their futures. (As a historical footnote, it should be noted here that Douglas had just unsuccessfully tried out for a guitar position in a new band called Television.) Douglas was eager to get something happening with John, picking out a Danelectro bass guitar for himself (that was soon smashed and replaced with a Fender Precision bass).

Knowing that he wanted to make the switch from bass to guitar, John also wanted a guitar that stood out. Virtually no one at that time—that he liked—playing rock'n'roll was using Mosrite guitars, besides the MC5's occasional use a few years prior. John found a guitar that suited him just fine—a used 1965 blue Mosrite Ventures II model for \$65 plus tax (\$69.55 total). He put down a \$15 deposit. The next day, he came back with the remaining balance.

I'm not a guitar freak by any means, but something has to be explained here for those not in the know. The Mosrite John picked out wasn't only made by some small, off-brand guitar company (founded by Semie Moseley) out in California, manufactured nine years earlier. No, this guitar happened to be one of Mosrite's least manufactured models, *ever*, with an estimated production run of sixty and under (depending on which Mosrite specialist you talk to).

This model is so darned rare for the reasons that follow. In early 1965, Mosrite first considered building a student model guitar along the lines of their competition, Gibson's Les Paul Jr. and Fender's Mustang. Mosrite's already-successful Ventures models were expensive and their price was out of range to younger players. Semie's brother Andy suggested and designed a slab body student model with no binding (decorative edge finishing/strengthening), simple pickups, and hardware like a folded steel vibrato (only seen on this model) and no German carve (a distinguishable wood-routing job that leaves the edges of a guitar body's top lower than the actual top).

This guitar was named the Ventures Model II and is estimated to have been introduced around June 1965. Semie was quickly disappointed with the model being labeled a Mosrite. It had none of the hallmarks of the prestigious brand they had consistently been building. He immediately halted production. A revamped version of the Ventures II model followed. It included a German carve, improved pickups, and standard Ventures hardware, such as the Moseley vibrato. These revamped models are also on the rare side, with an estimated production run of less than two hundred made.

Back to January of '74—John and Douglas (who is still playing guitar) get together within days with their other neighborhood pal and drummer Jeff Hyman (age twenty-two), and the noisy bash-fest of sorts begins. Jeff brings in his pal Richie

Stern to play bass, but Richie fucks off after a couple of noisy, non-productive rehearsals, never to be heard from again.

Not knowing what to play, let alone how to play together, the three creeps from Queens started to piece together what become the earliest versions of Ramones songs. Around this same time, Thomas Erdelyi and his good friend Monte Melnick (Monte went on to be the Ramones road manager from 1976 onward, for the band's entire career) had recently built up a rehearsal/recording studio/showcase space in the city over on E. 20<sup>th</sup> St. called Performance Studios Ltd.

The trio's old high school buddy Thomas finally got to check out what he had been urging all along. He saw the potential when watching them mutate during the first couple of months. Things took form, most notably John and that blue Mosrite. He took what he thought a rock and roll band should sound like in his mind and played it through that guitar like a weapon, destroying any belief that ridiculously over-extended guitar solos at that time should be "the norm."

A few months later, on March 30, after playing their first time at Performance for friends, Thomas convinced John that Jeff would be a perfect fit singing upfront. Jeff was already pulling back-up vocal duties because Douglas was blowing out his voice after the first couple of songs while simultaneously trying to play guitar. John wanted no part in singing. Jeff was more than willing to oblige, not only having frontman experience with his old glam band Sniper, but the music was really starting to take shape and his flailing drum style was falling behind in the ever-evolving progress of the band.

Remember, both John and Douglas were playing guitar during this time—no bass, just two guitars and drums. Jeff made the switch from the drum stool to vocalist and Douglas took permanent duty as bass player. They needed a drummer to drive the band's style home. Going through drummer after drummer after drummer, Thomas got fed up trying to explain to each person auditioning what his friends' band needed—a simplistic, driving force that keeps time, no wanking super rock solo/fills expertise needed.

Thomas wasn't a drummer, but he knew exactly what the band was looking for. Exasperated with sitting down each drummer and showing them what he was talking about, the other three finally told Thomas, "Why don't you try playing the drums for us?" Everything fell into place very quickly and



BILL PINKEL

## ...destroying any belief that ridiculously over-extended guitar solos at that time should be "the norm."

naturally after that, especially with Thomas's locomotive drum technique, which gelled perfectly with John's wall-of-chugging-Mosrite roar and Douglas's bass pummeling.

The band name "RAMONES" was suggested by Douglas, who was calling himself Dee Dee Ramone around this time (lifted from Paul McCartney who used to call himself Paul Ramone when checking into hotels during his days with The Beatles). The name is settled. Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee, and Tommy are soon to be part of rock'n'roll's rebirth. (As far as Jeff going with the name Joey instead of Jeffy, here are my theories: Jeffy sounds like someone who gets punched a lot, as opposed to Joey. This is rock'n'roll, not The Family fucking Circus.)

They worked the hell out of their set for more than four months, not playing publicly from March until their very first two nights at CBGB on August 16 and 17.

It's fucking on.

From August 1974 through October 1977, a great amount happened for Johnny and his blue Mosrite. The Ramones headlined the "Unsigned Band Festival" at CBGB in

the summer of 1975. They secured a contract with Sire Records. Their first full-length debuted on April 23, 1976 and was supported with East and West coast tours, a full U.S. tour, and a six-week tour of Europe in the Spring of 1977. They came back to the states for more dates across the country, including the filming of their first national television appearance on *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert* on August 9, 1977. They ended this leg of dates with Iggy Pop.

Sometime between the late evening of October 22 and the early morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the band's van got ripped off in Chicago—not broken into and some shit got stolen—the whole fucking van and their gear were gone, along with Johnny's blue six-stringed sidearm. The band was beyond pissed. As soon as Johnny got back to New York, he was fortunate enough to find and buy the exact same Mosrite, only in white instead of blue. That white Mosrite was the guitar he played for the next nineteen years until their last show here in L.A. on August 6, 1996.

This is where my curiosity comes into play even more. What happened to his blue

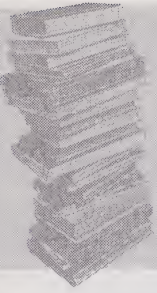
Mosrite? Fuck the monetary value. Forget about all of that. What's a damn shame is that guitar is such an important piece of rock'n'roll history. Whether you're a Ramones fan or not, you simply cannot deny what that guitar helped shape—and is still influencing—in the decades of music that followed. It's possible it was sold off to a pawn shop or to someone who might be into guitars, but this was back in 1977, when no one really gave two squirts of piss about some twelve-year-old guitar that wasn't a Gibson or Fender. It very well may have ended up in a dumpster around the same time the band's unrecovered van ended up in some chop shop in the greater Chicago area.

All I know is that I wouldn't want to be *any* of the poor bastards involved with that theft.

Hell hath no fury like the vengeful spirit of Johnny Ramone scorned.

I'm Against It,  
—Designated Dale  
designateddale@yahoo.com





## PLEASE READ ME

CAITLIN HOFFMAN

**"Shopping is a lot easier when you're ignorant."**

# Commercialism and the "Embarrassment" of Tits

I walk into West Edmonton Mall.  
I *hate* malls.

This is the largest mall in North America; tourists flock to it like capitalist homing pigeons. I've lived nine blocks away from it my whole life, and I *hate* it.

Shopping malls are en-masse celebrations of the seediest values. I once saw a sign at West Edmonton Mall that said, "Maybe you can live without it, but why take the chance?" Being exposed to that commercial intensity has me hitchhiking my way to Zombieville. I even have a mall-specific time limit: one hour or less. Any more than that and I'm one of the undead.

But this is the only place I can get bras, which I need since all the ones I own are too big.

I enter through Target, met with blazing lights and sale signs. Girls overburdened with shopping bags giggle incessantly (I wish I was exaggerating), and families make comments about being more used to Wal-Mart.

Working here would be slow-mo electroshock. Imagine having to smile in the face of your own insanity, attacked on the way to lunch by glossy advertisements making so many promises they'll break.

Models get thinner, shoppers get fatter.

That's not hyperbole. The average model *still* weighs twenty percent less than the average female, while obesity rates in Canada are close to reaching a historic high (according to CBC). (The Food Research and Action Centre tells us the U.S. is doing little better: in 2012, two-thirds of American adults were overweight or obese.)

What am I supposed to do? Ignore the irony and shop?

I walk into the bra store. On the wall, an airy blonde flaunts a pink bustier, hand coiled around her razor-sharp hip. Her mouth is frozen mid-laugh, blissful without personality.

I wonder how long she had to pose like that. Would I recognize her on the street, alive, windblown, and real? Or, has Photoshop done too "good" a job?

Lace smells funny in mass amounts. This is the single lingerie outlet in the mall that attempts ethical production, which means they only use the *nicest* sweatshops in the Middle East. (In response to my e-mail, they said they don't use child labor, are careful to ensure safe factory conditions, and implement the standard minimum wage.

As far as sweatshops go, that sounds nice to me... comparatively speaking.) I cringe at the cotton, satin, and spandex. I think of factories puffing endless toxins, all to spit out these overpriced attempts to meet function with seduction.

Must I pay so much for the sake of modesty? The only reason I need bras is so customers at work will be safe from my (apparently) offensive nipples. These stores insist on trying to make my boobs into burlesque singers.

Don't get me wrong: I love sex (when it's good) and love feeling sexy (as I'm sure most people do!). Yet for all my "romantic" activities, my modest stack of corsets goes, for the most part, unutilized. I worry that the more we crave fantasy, the less comfortable we'll be with reality. Reality is all we get when the makeup washes off, the clothes are stripped, and the hair is messed. Why not accept it?

As an ex-bulimic, I know how dangerous it is to focus on how a body looks instead of what it can do.

Brains don't pose for beauty pageants, though I wish they could.

I hang some choices against my arm, black on black on black. I look like a rock show refugee. My wrinkled plaid pants make a mockery of this store's homage to "womanhood."

I consider myself a genteel slip of a girl. Then I walk into a place like this, and I'm reminded of how much more feminine I'm expected to be. Are all of these frills one last ditch attempt to enforce archaic ideals? Has the supermodel sex kitten replaced the "lady-like," virginal paragon of lost days? Whether they tell us "Stay at home," or "Stick out your ass," they're ordering us around.

Visual standards are another method of control.

A sales associate smiles, teeth reflecting the lights. (I wish I saw her nametag so I could give her a real identity. I hate reducing someone to the day job they probably despise.) I smile back, knowing that we share a common bond in working (and suffering) retail. The only difference is I'm on my day off.

If only she knew it, too. Then we could bitch together.

"Can I set you up with a change room?"

"Thanks! How's your shift?"

Her answer is almost too honest.

There appears to be an unspoken rule about lighting in change rooms. They always

boast harsh florescent bulbs that lengthen every wrinkle you thought invisible, combing for all the cellulite and zits they can find.

I wonder if it's intentional. Do we buy more when we feel bad?

I look in the mirror. Three years ago I would have seen protruding ribs, imagined fat, and disappointment. Now I see my physicality for what it is: I'm small and short. My hair is cropped and blonde with shockingly dark roots because I can't afford another dye-job. I have a bright grin, sloping, spotty shoulders, and tiny tits.

If the ads were doing their work, I'd be embarrassed for my breasts. Yet, I'm only embarrassed for the bras claiming to boost an entire cup size. I'm perfectly content with my cup size, thanks. ("My, what small breasts you have!") "All the better to pogo, my dear.")

Once I tried on a push-up bra in one of the other stores. (This was before I'd bothered to educate myself concerning factory worker exploitation. Shopping is a lot easier when you're ignorant.)

The bra was solid gold sexual comedy. It looked like I'd strapped two leopard-printed pillows to my chest.

Why ruin expectation with false advertisement? How can anyone get comfortable with themselves if we all stay hidden?

We're taught "perfection" is power when it's only a lie... and an industry. No beauty market wants you to feel beautiful. They want you insecure and incomplete, desperate enough to be convinced that a swatch of makeup or a ridiculous push-up bra will save your self esteem. They force-feed us bullshit 'til we're so sick they can sell us their "antidote."

I know the laws of attraction are beyond social: they're also scientific. We're drawn to symmetrical faces and healthy-looking bodies, simply because our genetics seek out the greatest chance of successful procreation. But there's more to us than the desperate struggle to further our DNA. Can't we take the time to seek the spirit behind the body? Some say the punk scene is a haven for ugliness. I'd rather argue that the subculture strove to embrace a beauty that was less conventional. The only problem with such an approach is you may isolate people born with "conventionally" pretty faces! We need to welcome everyone. The image of the "hot" punk girl with sultry eyes, brooding lips, and ink-swathed arms is just as damaging



"A Beauty Pageant for Brains" | CASSIE J. SNEIDER

## People are sexiest when they're kind, prettiest when they're vulnerable, and hottest when they rebel.

as the "hot" girl staring down at us from billboards. Both create a limiting standard of what attractiveness could mean, reducing "good looks" to one face shape, dress size, or ethnicity.

Real beauty can't be boxed in. Would you tell Poly Styrene to get off the stage 'cause she doesn't resemble a magazine spread? Of course not.

We should celebrate the unique attractiveness in everyone ("imperfections" included). Everyone has a hang-up: flabby arms, spider veins, nose too big, dick too small, too much hair, *losing* too much hair, bad skin, big tummy, stumpy legs, etcetera.

Wouldn't it be great if those insecurities became our greatest assets?

It took me a long time to turn my self-judgement into praise. I had to learn to love myself, which is one of the hardest things a human could ever do (especially since we live in a culture dependent on self-loathing). Once I began to appreciate my body as a conduit to experience this fucking gorgeous universe, I realized my figure meant far more than a trim stomach or anorexic waistline. My body is a tool, not an ornament. There's no reason to punish it with purging,

starvation, and diet pills. My legs are meant to dance, my stomach to digest, my arms to hug, my hands to write. Like loving my brain for the thoughts it gives me, I love my body for its capability.

I wish more people put stock in beauty that celebrates the inner forces we can't see.

Take Patti Smith, David Johansen, or Craig Finn. It doesn't matter how they look, but how they *rock* (onstage or otherwise)! Punk gives us the opportunity to wear our souls inside out. So does confidence.

When you go to a show or read a zine, all that matters is the magic. That spark is so far below the skin no doctor could ever find it, least of all a cosmetic surgeon. If I'm allowing my heart (or head) to meld with a musician, a writer, or a reader (like you), I know we've beaten our shallowness into submission.

If only we could have that everywhere. Everyone should realize people are sexiest when they're kind, prettiest when they're vulnerable, and hottest when they rebel.

Rebels are gorgeous, especially when they lash out against society's standards.

I could have killed myself running the beauty race. Pop culture has a sneaky way

of pulling back the finish line before you reach it. Right when you think the "sexy look" has been sealed, some other trend erupts, leaving you to ditch your high heels for asparagus, and later, your asparagus for silicone implants. Just as these companies want you miserable, they want you one step behind. How else will they be able to dangle their carrot in your face?

I don't wanna buy lies. When I cash my bittersweet paychecks, I want to invest in self-improvement. Give me good books, healthy food, passionate experience. Let me run, let me laugh, let me learn, let me sweat on the side of a stage.

If there has to be product in this world, it should better us, rather than purveying useless aesthetics. If there has to be an industry, let's create one that puts money second and people first.

I walk up to the cash register and hand over my debit card, waiting for a revolution too late.

At least the bras were on sale.

—Caitlin Hoffman

one punk's guide to

# Silent Films



BY  
DONNA  
RAMONE



Buster Keaton's perfect face was what started this love.

I would wager everyone has seen at least one silent film in their lives. Having always been a troubled, goth kid at heart, I think my first silent film was *Nosferatu*, the German Expressionist vampire story from 1922 by F.W. Murnau. I know I saw some Charlie Chaplin when I was younger, probably with my mom one Sunday night (which might be how everyone first experiences Chaplin). As I got older, I watched and enjoyed a few silent films here and there on my own. But then, one beautiful October, I noticed my favorite cable channel was showcasing Buster Keaton all month.

"Holy shit, Buster Keaton!" I yelled this to my parents, who have long-since learned to ignore most things I scream over at them. I don't remember if it was one of his movies or shorts I watched that night. All I can remember was the intensity I felt. I didn't see the stereotypical idea of silent film—you know, the over-the-top slapstick comedy coupled with overly expressive facial and hand gestures, while a tinkling ragtime piano unrelentingly bangs out every pratfall. Instead, I saw someone defy gravity. I saw someone make me laugh loudly. I saw the world as it was in the 1910s. I saw where so much used in films today originated. But what really stood out was possibly the most beautiful face that has ever existed, and it belonged to Buster Keaton. My heart grew three sizes that day.

Illustrations by Bone Dust  
Layout by Wells Tipley

## A Not-Very-Brief History of Film

A not-very-brief history of films goes something like this: The whole thing started in the 1870s when Eadweard Muybridge set up a series of cameras to take a succession of photos that would prove, when prompted by the then-governor of California, that at full speed, a horse would have all four legs off the ground at some point (and just so you know, the whole thing about it being a bet has since been proven false). Turns out, horses absolutely have all four legs up when in a full gallop. Muybridge continued to use the process to study movement in humans and animals, eventually making a career out of taking beautiful black and white photos of Yosemite (they were just as boring and popular as Ansel Adams, turns out).

In America, Thomas Edison took the idea of projecting a succession of photos further and in 1889 brought the invention of the Kinetoscope to the masses. Those were the penny machines with the viewing holes at the top of the cabinet that you pressed your face into to watch a funny, flickering "movie" that lasted under sixty seconds (if you've been to Disneyland, you may remember seeing some by the Candy Palace on Main Street). The Kinetoscope's popularity spread worldwide, with everyone wanting more of this new technology.

Alexander Black, an American, is credited with creating the projected photoplay, which was similar to those slide projectors you may remember from school. Same idea there. It was a series of images, backlit by a lantern and shown in succession on a screen as a person narrated the story. It was similar to when someone's dad showcased the family trip to Europe in the '80s.

Patents started to pour in afterwards as inventors improved upon the ability to show a lit-up succession of photos. Everyone, everywhere was trying to patent a new style of projector. The year was 1895. It was France that eventually won the projector race, with the award going to Auguste and Louis Lumière. The Lumière brothers are considered the earliest filmmakers and commonly regarded as the inventors of the movie.

## Audiences Shit Their Pants. Twice.

The Lumière projector was called the cinématographe and was the hit of Paris that year—despite the fact that their first film was just footage of workers leaving a factory. The Lumière brothers were also responsible for *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat*—the infamous film that caused the audience to shit themselves as they attempted to leap out of the way of the moving train projected onto the screen in front of them. I know we all like to think that the people of that era were "simple" for not understanding a new technology immediately, but people still react to something coming directly at them on a movie screen (like those 3-D films all you kids seem to enjoy). And there we were: seventeen meters of film cranked out fifty seconds of flickering movement, and the world rejoiced.

The subjects of these early, short films were everyday life: a small portion of a boxing match, a couple kissing, a baby getting a bath, some really cute ladies dancing, some guy sneezing, etc. This may sound boring by today's standards, but if I had just become aware of the advent of photography, telephones, and indoor plumbing, a lit screen portraying a person moving would probably cause me to run to a church for safety from this demon magic.

Speaking of magic, it was a magician in France who brought us what is considered the first narrative film, *Voyage dans la Lune* (or *Trip to the Moon*) in 1902. Georges Méliès combined the use of film with storytelling to create what we call a movie today. Using a studio built within a greenhouse (natural light was necessary for filming in those days), Méliès made amusing movies that were rooted in fantasy, horror, and science fiction. He used ideas from his days as a magician, along with film splicing, to make people disappear in a puff of smoke, have someone duplicated six times to form an entire band, or animate a rocket blasting through the sky. It is in those creative shorts that the majority of what we understand about a movie is derived. His crew even hand-painted each cell of certain films to create some of the first color films. (If you saw the 2011 Martin Scorsese film *Hugo*, you know some of his incredible story.)

Meantime, Thomas Edison was still fighting to be at the forefront of the motion picture race and produced a narrative film, *The Great Train Robbery*. An explosive western action movie, by 1903 standards as well as today's, the film runs almost twelve minutes long. You

watch helplessly as robbers steal a train, force all the passengers to give them their valuables, shoot a guy in the back, and have a shootout with other cowboys. It ends with one of the robbers shooting the audience, point blank. Much like the legend of people jumping out of the way when watching film of an oncoming train, audiences screamed when the bad guy they'd been watching for twelve minutes suddenly drew a gun and shot them. I recently re-watched it for this article and just before the guy shot at me, even I made some kind of "Ack!" sound.

## Thomas Edison Was a Bully and a Dick

One of the worst things to develop during these times was the douchery now present in show business forevermore: the rip-off. Unsurprisingly, Georges Méliès's impressive films were being distributed. People all over the world wanted to see them, so his movies were shipped to movie houses, at the time called "Nickelodeons," all over the globe. The thing was, distribution rights and regulation, royalties, copyrighting, and every other legality that we now groan at didn't exist yet. So, people like Thomas Edison would get a copy of one of Méliès's films, dub it as many times as they wanted, and sell it to American movie houses.

In 1908, Edison founded the Motion Picture Patents Company, a trust and distribution company which allowed him to control the U.S. and European film industries. The company required each studio to produce 1,000 feet of film weekly, which was a lot for a smaller company like Méliès's. That's right, friends, America's prestigious inventor was also a total dick. Eventually, Méliès left the corporation. He made fewer and fewer films until he stopped completely in 1913. He eventually received the recognition he deserved later in life by way of awards and praise, but he died in 1938 a poor toy maker and candy seller in a Parisian train station.

Another important thing to remember is that the prestige of film wasn't anything like it is now. It was a trade not very highly regarded. Those involved went un-credited and nameless, and it was rare to find someone who was previously trained in anything. Stage actors were not interested in the lowbrow pantomime of the silent screen. The jobs didn't pay well at first, either. If you were young and looking for easy work, you could help build sets or crank cameras for the movies. The film industry took all types, and it wasn't exactly the kind of job that thrilled your in-laws. Based on my own research, most people, however, found the entire endeavor to be a lot of fun. Early actors and directors weren't known by name to the public until about 1911. It was around that year when the studios of the time realized that audiences had favorites, while actors were starting to acknowledge that film acting wasn't just a lowly form of stage acting—especially since their paychecks were getting more and more impressive.

## Dumb Cops and Bathing Suits

Between 1909 and 1913 the movies became *the* movies. Actors with devoted fans and large bank accounts, prestigious and artistic directors, large studios people knew by name, genre films for different audiences, famous animal actors—it was all happening and the industry was growing exponentially. This is when names many of us recognize stepped into the spotlight: D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennet, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Tom Mix, Warner Brothers, Cecil B. DeMille, Paramount Pictures, and the list goes on.

This period of time saw the rise of highly influential and regularly imitated acts. One such torchbearer was Mack Sennet. Originally an actor, he made a deal with some high rollers and went entrepreneurial when he took over Keystone Studios. Keystone primarily developed comedies, and Sennet created The Keystone Kops in 1914. That was quickly followed a year later by Sennet's Bathing Beauties. These were one or two-reelers featuring bumbling cops in slapstick comedy at its finest and the bathing beauties were—well, cute girls in bathing suits.

Sennet personally went talent scouting and hired some of the biggest comedians and cutest cuties, all of whom were relative unknowns at the time. Easily, his best finds were the then-vaudeville comedians Roscoe Arbuckle (poor guy hated being called "Fatty") and Charlie Chaplin. Harold Lloyd, Gloria Swanson, Mabel Normand and a shit-ton of others who got their start at Keystone Studios. Even today, the image of a blue-suited, nightstick-waving,

bumbling police officer is a familiar one in films, and there's no lack of women in swimsuits.

## Now I'm Ready For My Close-Up

Another innovator starting up at the same time was Cecil B. DeMille. Like Sennet, he also started out as an actor, but it was his directorial debut in 1914 that really matters. *The Squaw Man* is the sweeping, six-reel drama of an Englishman, wrongly accused of embezzlement, hiding out in the American frontier. While there, he marries a Native American woman and they have a son. With the overdramatics DeMille is known for, the Englishman is cleared of the charges and returns to his girlfriend and true love in England, along with his half-Native son since his wife killed herself.

That was followed in 1923 by DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*, which was just as huge, expensive, and painfully long as his remake with Charlton Heston in 1956. Any grand, saturated, three-hour epic with a set larger than some European countries feels like a DeMille. I would wager the majority of what many of us know from the Bible we learned from a DeMille movie. And the stereotype of a screaming, tyrannical movie director, megaphone in hand, with only a horseshoe of hair left on his head? That's DeMille.

It wasn't Cecile B. DeMille who invented the historical epic film, however. It wasn't DeMille who invented the close-up within a scene, either. Both were the creation of director D. W. Griffith. In very early films, scenes were shot from only one stationary point in the room. Moving a large, heavy camera by hand while steadily filming wasn't possible. During a dramatic scene, however, Griffith made the decision to stop filming, get a close range shot of a woman's grief-stricken face, and then return back to capture the scene again.

## Sorry about the Black Face

In 1915, the still-controversial *The Birth of a Nation* was released. It's considered the first blockbuster film, and boy was it ever. Over three hours long, the story depicts two post-Civil War families, one in the north and one in the south. Along the way, blackface slaves are stoked to be slaves, Lincoln gets assassinated, and The Ku Klux Klan was a heroic and driving force in making this country so damned great. I wish I was kidding. Even audiences in 1915 found that bullshit offensive, so Griffith returned in 1916 with *Intolerance*. The narrative is comprised of four vignettes of—surprise—intolerance mostly, and how intolerance is a bad time.

Here comes silent film's ugly racist cloud: characters in black face. 1903 brought us the first adapted screenplay, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and with it, we first see white actors with shoe polish on their faces, being stereotypes. Though this practice started back in the days of vaudeville and promptly dug in its hooves and stuck around through many talkies, silent films are easily picked on for being racist.

Now, I'm not about to defend Al Jolson and his jazz hands any time soon, but I will point out that unfortunately, then and now, a character dressed as another ethnicity for the stage or silver screen is common practice. If you feel inclined to scold and write off an entire era of filmmaking for using black face, then you better not have enjoyed the comedic stylings of *Borat* or have a tattoo of a woman in a feathered headdress. That said, there were a lot of different ethnicities represented in early films. Given, they were usually background characters, stereotypes or villains; there are cases where they were the leading man or the best friend to the leading lady.

## Multi-Ethnic Heartthrobs

Noble Johnson, for example, started the Lincoln Motion Picture Company in 1916. Lincoln Motion was the first all-black owned film company. The films they produced were all stories of black protagonists beating the odds and triumphing. Sessue Hayakawa, born Kintaro Hayakawa in Japan, still stands today as one of the most prolific and successful Asian-American actors. After appearing in DeMille's *The Cheat* in 1915, he became a hugely famous heartthrob, and continued to act well into old age (he's best remembered as Colonel Saito in *Bridge on the River Kwai*). He fought against being depicted as a stereotype, and in 1918 he formed Haworth Pictures Corporation. In the following



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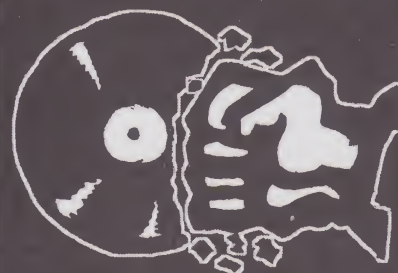
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HOSPITAL JOB *The Believer* CD/LP  
HI HO SILVER, AWAY! *Chore* CD/LP

#### FRENCH EXIT | GUTS & BLACK STUFF



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three years, he controlled all content in the twenty-three films that were made and was a major influence in changing the American public's perception of Asians.

Even the era's most famous male sex symbols were minorities. Ramón Navarro—born in Mexico—fled to Los Angeles with his family to escape the Mexican Revolution in 1913. His sexy accent was very real. And Rudolph Valentino was actually born (brace yourself) Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina d'Antonguolla, in Italy, and was registered at Ellis Island in 1913. These few examples don't excuse any racism, though. I'm talking about early films, not the sociological injustices portrayed and upheld in mass media. Racism is the worst. Let's just recognize that and grow from it, dudes.

## Films Catch Fire—Literally

If there's a main point to this article that I want to make, it's this: Silent films are just as good, if not better, than any other film, even when viewed today. The silent era has something for just about anyone. Remember when the American Film Institute had that big to-do about their list of the 100 greatest films of all time? The 2007 revision of AFI's 100 list included five silent films: *Intolerance* (1916), *The Gold Rush* (1925), *The General* (1926), *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), and *City Lights* (1931). Only five out of 100 may not seem like much, but for two major reasons it should be a big deal. The first is five different silent films are in the same category as *Citizen Kane* and *Lawrence of Arabia*, which, if you've caught on, is exactly where I think they should be.

And secondly, we are lucky to still have silent films. Remember, there was no home market for movies for a very long time. Not only was there no home market, there was little chance of a film being shown again after its initial run. You saw a movie and you moved on.

Film companies would make hundreds of short one- or two-reel films in a year to appease a public that stopped into movies houses at least once a week. Those early filmstrips were coated in nitrate, which is a highly flammable substance that grows unstable when stored improperly. Ever wonder why so many film vaults manage to catch fire? It's dummies not taking care with all of that nitrate sitting around. Since there was also silver content that could be extracted from the film, a lot of it was recycled during World War II and the Great Depression. But it seems a lot of studios just didn't want to pay to house all of those films, since it was pricey to have them kept cool and dry. Studios simply dumped them. Anywhere between seventy and ninety percent of silent films are registered as "lost." The only reason we know so much about these lost films is because many of the screenplays and on-set photos survived in archives, since they thankfully don't also unexpectedly burst into flames.

## Women, Off Screen

Now—through historical efforts—we have proof of what a large, driving force women were during film's early days. Women were everything from directors or costume designers to screenwriters or producers. No perimeters were being set with this relatively new industry being founded. Alice Guy Blaché was the first female director, starting in 1896. She wasted no time, making six hundred films, primarily in France. The Talmadge Sisters, Norma and Constance, were both successful actresses. However, their real successes came from producing films and they later founded studios bearing their names, along with their mother and younger sister Natalie (who, as a matter of cross-referencing, was married to Buster Keaton for eleven years).

One of Hollywood's greatest businesspersons, however, was Mary Pickford. She was dubbed "America's Sweetheart," although she was born in Canada, and was the most popular actress of her time. She always insisted on higher pay and made sure she was the one making money off of her image and talents, and not any studio heads. Pickford, along with soon-to-be-husband Douglas Fairbanks, friend of Charlie Chaplin, and maybe-racist director D. W. Griffith, founded United Artists in an effort to better control their careers and works. She may have been an actress, but she called the shots and ran her own career and assets (in many cases, she managed her husband's, too). She was shrewd and brilliant in business. She was also generous and kind. There's a documentary about her, *Mary Pickford: The Muse of the Movies*, which I highly recommend.

Films today are dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants. Many of the archetypes, genres, stereotypes, framing shots, film techniques, and

## Recommendations, Even "A Grass Sandwich"

Film recommendations would seem to be the next logical step in this guide. But this is where we run into a problem. There are a lot of silent films, in every genre, played by many talented actors. Let's say you love comedies. Then may I present to you the silent era's holy comedic trinity: Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd. These three men *are* film comedy. Chaplin as The Tramp was full of gags, heart, and sentimental appeal. Harold Lloyd was the go-getting, never-give-up hero who ended up in the funniest circumstances by happenstance. And then, my beloved Buster Keaton. I will start a church where Buster Keaton is our savior. He was the little, clumsy nice guy who would pratfall right into your heart. He wrote and executed a lot of his creative and hilarious sight gags, he did all of his own stunts, and was characteristically dead-pan through it all. Lloyd in *Safety Last!*, Keaton in *Sherlock Jr.*, and Chaplin in *The Kid* are all great starting points.

- If you prefer historical epics, I already mentioned the biggest and best, *The Ten Commandments* and *The Birth of a Nation*. If you prefer it to be even more dramatic and French, there is *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.
- If you like adventure, there's Douglas Fairbanks in *Robin Hood* or *The Thief of Baghdad*.
- If you enjoy science fiction, nothing can quite compare to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.
- If classic stories are your thing, J.M. Barrie personally oversaw the production and wrote the adapted screenplay for 1924's *Peter Pan*.
- If you ache for love stories, watch Rudolph Valentino in *The Sheik* or Lillian Gish in *Broken Blossoms*, depending on your preference of sexy lead.
- If you enjoy "femme fatale" movies, there's Theda Bara in *A Fool There Was*, or Greta Garbo in *Flesh and the Devil*. Bara's performance coined the term "vamp," since her role in the film is that of a seductive vampire.
- If you're into horror films, there's Lon Chaney, the horror icon, in *Phantom of the Opera*. Equally eerie is *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, a German Expressionist film about murder, insanity, and sleepwalking.
- If you like picking apart propaganda films, go to town on *Battleship Potemkin*, a Soviet picture that is as amazing and revolutionary as it is communist.
- If you like the "hooker with a heart of gold" story, there's the lighter *Sadie Thompson*, with Gloria Swanson, or the darker *Pandora's Box* with Louise Brooks.
- If you're the kind of weenie to fall for romantic comedies, there's always Clara Bow's *It*. Her role gave birth to the term "It girl" and was the blueprint for Betty Boop. Hell, if you want hardcore pornography there's *A Free Ride* from 1915, complete with anonymous crew names like "Will B. Hard" and a urination scene.

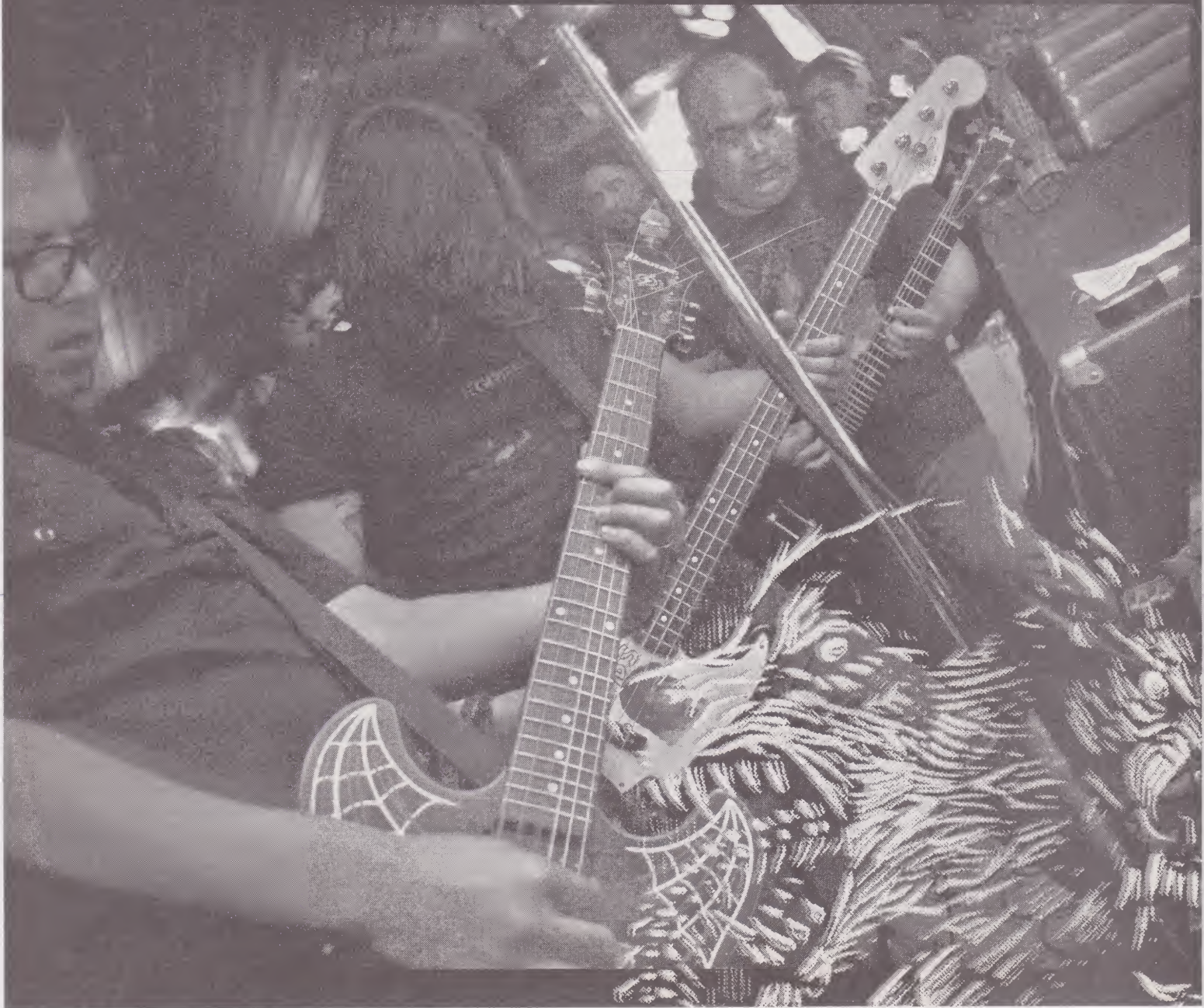
even beauty standards stem from the roots of the silent film era. Most can hold their own today as entertainment. Some may be set to a slower pace than what you're used to, and others may seem choppy since hand-cranked film speeds didn't convert well to the later standardized twenty-four-frames-per-second. But perfect technique isn't what make silent films so great. In fact, they're far from perfect. Early filmmakers didn't know that, though. They were simply creating the greatest stories possible, using nothing but their own creativity, ingenuity, and passion.

Except Buster Keaton films. Those are actually perfect.



# Humboldt

For fun, for us.



I discovered Bümblått two years after I became punk. When I first found punk, I fell in love with all the undisputed greats: Misfits, The Clash, Joy Division, The Jam, Dead Kennedys. These bands existed in an imaginary and mysterious place. Different times. Faraway places. Outside of touring bands, the here-and-now just wasn't on my dial, despite the world around me resembling a dystopian novel.

Then I heard Bümblått. They've created songs about your mind tearing itself apart and people passing too soon. Bümblått not only made punk tangible through pummeling, tumultuous DIY shows, but by being real people from neighborhoods and situations I related to. They're a band that embraces both sides of the war-torn Mexico/U.S. border—while having the guts to call out each side's

bullshit—and creating something from the grey rage foaming in the middle.

The sound may be heavy and the imagery dark, but the message shines bright with a steadfast persistence to an inclusive release, humbly wrought by working class artists. —Rene Navarro

Ubaldo Salvador—guitar and vocals  
Oscar Vargas—guitar and vocals  
Fernando Cruz—bass and vocals  
Adrian Balderama—drums and vocals

Interview by Rene Navarro and Todd Taylor  
Interview assistance by Matthew Hart and Jeff Proctor  
Photos by Donofthedeath and Victor Sanchez  
Layout by Daryl



Your first show was  
actually inside of a sewer?

There was no door, no cover,  
it was all donations, and there was  
beer everywhere.



**Todd:** The internet says that Bûmbklåått is Portuguese slang for kind of like, "motherfucker"?

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, it has, from what we know, several meanings—one of them being that, and then I guess it also means "blood clot."

**Todd:** How come I can't find any other reference at all except through your guys' name?

**Ubaldo:** I don't know, because we had a hard time finding it, too. I remember when our first 7" came out, we gave a copy to Danzig at Comi-Con and he's all, "What are you guys, German?" I was like, "No," but, the font...

**Todd:** Right, right, and the dots over the U and A's.

**Fernando:** I know Soulfly, does a song—or it also could mean like a fucked up situation, kind of like a cuss word, but that might be why you can't really find it, 'cause it's slang. People just yell it when there's something fucked up that's about to happen. That's what I've found out about it.

**Rene:** What's it like being an all-Mexican punk band in "America's finest city" (San Diego's unofficial slogan)? Is it any different than being a punk band in one of the world's most dangerous cities (Tijuana)?

**Ubaldo:** Well, first of all, we don't look at it as, "Oh, we're a Mexican band." We're just a band of friends that have known each other forever. You know, half the band is from Tijuana. The other half is from San Diego, and we just like what we do.

**Fernando:** More than anything the border really is there, with us being two guys from over there, two guys from here. We do say we are from San Diego because half of us are from here, but I still think a lot of people think of us as being from Tijuana maybe because we all are Mexican, but, really, I feel at home there and I feel at home here. I just feel like that's a cool thing that we have.

**Todd:** What do you guys do on a day-to-day basis, what are your jobs?

**Adrian:** I do graphic design, illustration, and concept art for licenses, brands, and bands.

**Rene:** You've done a lot of Bûmbklåått's artwork, is that correct? Which pieces have you done? What do they represent?

**Adrian:** I've done most of the artwork. I can name the ones that aren't mine. There are only two. As far as a theme in my artwork, it depends. In the beginning, some of my art was trying to represent right and wrong, betrayal, anger, things of that nature. Later on—and more recently—mourning, affliction, sorrow, and frustration.

**Oscar:** I'm a glass blower. I've been doing it for twenty-eight years. It's a family business. I've been there since I was a kid, but I've only been blowing glass nine years.

**Rene:** Who taught you?

**Oscar:** Nobody, just watching others and wasting materials.

**Ubaldo:** I have a small print shop that I work off of in Golden Hill and then I also work at this club called the Belly Up and drive around like, you know, "celebrities."

**Todd:** So how was John Waters?

**Ubaldo:** John Waters—that was the only time I got star struck. I brought him some fruit. [laughter] No, seriously I did and then when I walked in I... [more laughter] and cheese. I first saw his shoes, his little Vans or something. I couldn't look up, and then he just greeted me and made me feel really comfortable. He was really awesome. He drew a mustache on me, with a sharpie.

**Todd:** That's awesome!

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, that's why I like that job. There are a lot of cool things that have happened, like meeting people like him.

**Todd:** What was he doing?

**Ubaldo:** He was doing a Christmas show that he does every year. One-man act type of thing.

**Fernando:** I work at a law firm that specializes in collections. I'm a supervisor there. It's pretty crazy. It's pretty intense. High pressure. Monday through Friday, eight to five with extra hours here and there.

**Ubaldo:** We should have you charge when we play shows.

**Fernando:** Yeah man, I'll make 'em pay. [laughter]

**Rene:** It's funny but, before I even met you guys, I was in Joser's (Ubaldo's little brother) room, and I saw this awesome painting. So, did you actually paint the cover for the Run For Your Fucking Life 12"?

**Ubaldo:** No, that's a painting that was, well, I took the picture. It's a painting that was at Pokez (a restaurant in San Diego). It's in one of the rooms in the back. These guys liked that picture a lot. I did the layout for the Run For Your Fucking Life 12."

**Rene:** That solves years of people fucking with me, and then taking it back. That question was for me.

**Fernando:** You thought Ubaldo painted that?

**Ubaldo:** I probably could've... [laughter]

**Rene:** Because I've seen a lot of your other stuff that you do, but it's all mostly just portraits. So I was like, "Wow, he really went deep pastels."

**Fernando:** If you look closely into that cover, you will see cat hair from his cat that got into the picture.

**Ubaldo:** Oh, on the scanner, yeah. She fell asleep on the scanner.

**Fernando:** On the record, you see it. I think I pointed it out. I was looking at it one time and was like, "What the fuck is this?" What was the name of the cat?

**Ubaldo:** Ginger.

**Rene:** Despite the lame ass border, do you feel that having the band entrenched in two separate, yet connected scenes has helped in any way? You kind of get to double dip on shows when bands come through...

**Todd:** Be ambassadors...

**Ubaldo:** Yes and no because, like you said, they see more people over there and we see more people over here, but it's also harder to get together. Sometimes we're like, "Man, if we all lived here, we could practice more or we could play more shows." We're not able to play shows right away, jump on it. We've got to talk about it, and plan it, because that's how it is. Everyone's busy and crossing the

border. The border thing—it's been tough on the band.

**Todd:** Also, tell us, for people who haven't crossed the border that often, how long it can take or how random it is.

**Ubaldo:** It can take anywhere from fifteen minutes to three hours, even more.

**Fernando:** On an any-day basis. Walking or diving, it doesn't matter. On that question though, personally, I think it has helped us a bunch, like you said, like ambassadors. We get people who hit us up about shows in Mexico that we would never think of because we are the band that people will say, "Oh, you guys want to go play Mexico, you want to play Tijuana? You should hit up Bûmbklåått." It'll be bands that are nothing like our style. I'm booking that band Big Eyes in December down in TJ, and they're totally excited about that. We get a lot of that, and it's cool, because then we'll get to book the show in San Diego also.

**Ubaldo:** Especially with all our friends and all the years we've been doing this, there are people we can refer, like "This guy can take that show."

**Todd:** Not only refer, you know you're not just sending them into a black hole.

**Ubaldo:** Right, and when it gets to the point where it's a touring band on a Monday and nobody really knows them, you're better off giving them advice like, "Dude, just go have fun in TJ and don't play."

**Fernando:** A lot of people are nervous about it because they don't know what's going on in Tijuana. It's a whole different country. I remember there was this one band, This Is My Fist. They were playing a show and we were hanging out. They played a show here in North Park. This was years ago, at this little art shop by Scolari's. They had a couple of shows there. We had just played with them up in the Bay Area at Gilman, and they had played down here. So I went out and saw them. I was talking to them, and was like, "Oh yeah, you guys should come down to Tijuana and play a show," and she (Annie My Fist) says "Wow, really? They have shows there? I always thought it was just like, dirt." So it's like, things like that, and you can't blame her for being naïve.

**Todd:** Annie's super nice. I can't imagine she was being negative about it.

**Fernando:** And what's cool is she was being honest. It's like, "I didn't know." So I think a lot of people don't know, so it's cool when they send them our way I think they feel a little bit more comfortable. They've got their shit going on in Tijuana, so we'll be fine as long as we go through them."

**Todd:** Ubaldo, you have a long history of booking bands and clubs in Tijuana.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, I started in the early '90s. I was playing in this band called Chicken Farm and I had some cousins in TJ, Black Market. They were doing shows in the late '70s to early '80s. So I'm like, "Well, there's people here. There are punks in TJ," and I started booking. It took a while to build up, but I would get a lot of friends from the Bay Area. Black Fork had a lot

My feet were handcuffed together, my arms were handcuffed to the bed, and then I'm kicking drugs, and there are cops watching me, just laughing at me.



to do with it and a bunch of cool bands, and it just grew. It took a while, but now to think back, and see how it is now, TJ is definitely on the map, really going off with shows like crazy. There's a great scene there.

**Rene:** Speaking of the great scene there, I would say it's in part due to the fact that it's a bit easier to open up your own punk bar. So I'd just like to know what your top five punk bars are in TJ.

**Oscar:** I guess my top venues have been Doberman, Black Box right now, 1979, El Tigre, and La Prisión, because the owners used to play in bands and know what a drag it is to put on good shows.

**Ubaldo:** My first would be Iguanas. A lot of people in San Diego and Tijuana got, for lack of a better word, baptized with some awesome fucking shows there, man.

**Fernando:** When I was a kid, my brother took me to go see Jane's Addiction down there. That was the first time for me, and I was like, "Holy shit, this is insane."

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, I remember my dad taking me when I was like sixteen. I went to go see The Cramps. When he picked me up, he was like, "How was it?" I was like, "It was great, just don't ask me what he did."

**Fernando:** Ranas was a cool place. We used to go play shows there when I was in high school.

**Ubaldo:** Ranas, yeah that's one. Another one would be 5to Patio. I'll give them credit. That was one.

**Rene:** Oh, man! Do you guys remember when I wasn't old enough to get into fucking clubs?

**Fernando:** And we'd sneak you in.

**Rene:** You guys would make me carry your stuff and pile up the drums...

**Fernando:** ...so they couldn't see him. We'd be like, "Carry this and just come on."

**Ubaldo:** Then, we'd have to give credit to the short-lived Guano, which was a club we had—which we had attempted to open—it wasn't even a bar.

**Fernando:** It was more of a show spot because at that time there were a lot of bands hitting us up for shows down there, and just dealing with the bullshit of the people who owned the bars and the fucking cops, we just decided to try and do something. Well, these guys really went out of the way. They got the spot and it was...

**Ubaldo:** ...it was nice. It was short lived but worth it.

**Fernando:** From Ashes Rise played there with us, the only show.

**Ubaldo:** Pretty much. I remember Billy got electrocuted. After that show, all our gear got stolen, and our spirits were kind of down.

**Rene:** That was Ubaldo and Oscar, right?

**Ubaldo:** Pretty much, yeah. For me, we had a pretty good stretch at Tilly's on Revolution. The Locust would play there.

**Todd:** I know this is a big brush, but what's the cop situation when you're running something like that?

**Ubaldo:** Just horrible—or at least when I was doing shows—they're just on you like flies on shit. They see you charging and they want a cut.

**Fernando:** They're like, "You're getting paid, so you're going to pay us, or we're going to shut this down."

**Rene:** And that was pre-drug war. Those were the good times.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, then you got the cops on your ass and then you have your friends trying to get in for free, so it's like, "Come on guys..."

**Rene:** Then you've got that one girl punching everyone in the face. You had to pick her up and take her out, while she was punching you in the face.

**Ubaldo:** I had to become my own security once in a while, and you've got to kick people out.

**Fernando:** I know Magico on Revolution Ave. had a bunch of good shows. That's when I would go see a bunch of bands I didn't know, Hora Negra, Discordia, Krakneo—all the TJ bands, all right there. And also the Torito Pub had a downstairs place that was awesome for shows. We played a bunch of shows there with Phobia and Final Conflict.

**Rene:** If I recall correctly—the basement of El Torito Pub had a stage that the hitch of a trailer was held up by empty beer kegs and bricks?

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, that's the place. Also, back then, there were so many fights. It was crazy.



VICTOR SANCHEZ

I'm glad that's over. Everyone's calmed down a lot.

**Rene:** So, there was super violent '90s TJ punk. There was mid-2000s super politically correct punk, and now there's more punk than we can even shake a stick at in TJ. How crazy has it been for you guys to have been there since before what I would consider from my perspective, "the beginning?"

**Ubaldo:** It's good. The only thing I'm glad is over is back then—like in the '90s—everything was so segregated. Metalheads would get in fights with punks. Now we're at the point where you can like metal and you can like punk, pop punk, whatever, and it's cool, you know? That's one thing I didn't like about back then. I'm glad it's more open now. Even with shows, I wish they were more mixed up than "this is a crust show," "this is a pop punk show," or "this is a metal show." I like mixing bands up.

**Fernando:** I think I'm starting to see that in TJ now, where things are mixing a little bit. It's still not where I want it to be, where it could be, but it's getting there. I've seen it happen a couple of times and I think that's awesome. I just think where it's gone to now compared to where it was, totally. It makes it better for everybody.

**Todd:** What do you consider the music that you play?

**Ubaldo:** To me it's soul music. That's what I'm trying to play.

**Fernando:** To me it's just punk rock. I don't like the labels of "hardcore punk,"

"straight edge punk," or "pop punk." To me if it's punk, it sends a message. It's what we want to say. It's a 'fuck you' to everybody. It's our punk rock music man. So, to me, it's punk and that's it.

**Todd:** You guys, for better or for worse, get clumped into d-beat and crust. Put on a Tragedy or a From Ashes Rise record, put on a Bümckläätt record. It's all within the same arena, the same sonic state. Do you find yourself thinking ever of your day-to-day life, your more domestic life—you don't want to be a shitbag to your family and your friends and your girlfriends and wives, you're driving your kids around—and also you have these political ideas going on in your head. Have you ever tried to put that into your music or lyrics?

**Ubaldo:** It has, though we're not really political. I mean, there are issues we definitely have and we like to address. I believe what you were just saying totally explains what most of our lyrics are compared to like, "Hey, fuck the government."

**Ubaldo:** Everyone can relate.

**Todd:** Also, we have to realize that you guys are definitely a product of San Diego and Tijuana, running the Sin Fronteras / Sal Si Pudes festival. That's what I really like about you guys. Your music seems very honest and something you're dealing with on a day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month, year-to-year basis.

**Fernando:** I think it's just us being involved—us even having to go over to

Tijuana to practice or them having to cross over. We have to take issue with that. There's a lot of things where, if we're not involved—or we're not talking about it, singing about it, we're not really doing it—it's kind of hypocritical and I don't think we want to fall into that.

**Todd:** And it's also not *just* hypothetical too. That's one thing I respond very well to in you guys is that it's not vague. It comes across as very grounded in day-to-day experience.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, it's definitely part of our lives. I need it. I look forward to practice.

**Todd:** And you guys are like twenty-five, twenty-six? [Laughter.] (They are older.) The stakes do get higher the older you get because it's harder to maintain that drive and making sure that these things are important to you.

**Ubaldo:** That's what it is. We like it. It makes us feel good. I've never dressed the part. People ask me, "Oh, you're in a band?" Just because I don't dress the part doesn't mean that I'm not like a—it's part of my life, but I don't have to prove it by wearing patches or blah, blah, blah.


**Todd:** Right, right. Plainclothes punks. The punk's inside.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, it's just the way I live.

**Rene:** From what I understand, your first show was actually inside of a sewer. Is that correct?

**Ubaldo:** Yeah.

**Oscar:** The way the kids got it together to do a show down there was amazing! There was no door, no cover, it was all donations,

A black and white collage. At the top and bottom are two knives, possibly combat knives, with detailed handles and blades. The central image shows a man wearing a baseball cap and a t-shirt with a graphic that says "Disfear". He is playing a drum set. The entire image is framed by a torn, crumpled paper border. The text "Don't come in with feelings, or they'll get hurt." is written in a stylized, gothic font across the upper part of the collage.

Don't come in with feelings,  
or they'll get hurt.

and there was beer everywhere. The show went really well, but I think that the sewers got too trendy and they were doing rave shows down there, so, as usual, the sewer shows got busted by the cops.

**Todd:** How was the sound?

**Fernando:** The sound was ridiculous. It was everywhere. Think about a shitty outdoor show where the sound's going everywhere. It's like that, but the fucking sewer catches it and sends it right back to you. It was awesome. We played four songs. We had four songs.

**Ubaldo:** It was our first show, the first sewer show in San Diego, which they still have until today.

**Fernando:** It was Shitlist from Seattle, Run For Your Fucking Life, and Bümklåått.

**Todd:** And I take it the sewer was definitely dry enough?

**Ubaldo:** Some parts, yeah.

**Matt:** Are you locked in there?

**Fernando:** It's crazy. You park in this one area. You walk through these sewers where there are tunnels and you're definitely ducking down, you're hunched over, pushing your gear, and all you know is at the other end of the tunnel, that's where it's at. Once you get out of there, it opens up into some outdoor spot underneath where the freeways are passing you, and then you see the huge sewer tunnel, where it's definitely thirty feet open. It's huge.

**Todd:** So someone takes a generator down there?

**Fernando:** Yeah, just a normal generator and plug in. It was cool, man. It was fun. What happened was they started doing it too much where the cops started showing up and then it started dying down. Now they're doing them, and they're just secret shows. I'll get text messages all the time. Something happened. There's a reason why they keep going out there. It wasn't just shows anymore. People were going out there tagging, and skating, so it was cool. People were using it for different stuff.

**Rene:** Speaking of tagging, art, and that kind of stuff, Ubaldo always posts cool pictures on the internet.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, that's our good friend Anthony, he did Kids, and it was all over the U.S., hopping trains. He had his little characters and everything. Started out in Chula Vista and took off in the early '90s. We've lost him since, but we try to keep him alive that way.

**Fernando:** I was watching a video at a bar here, and it was Green Day playing at Gilman—their first show when they were allowed to play back. I think Tiltwheel was the one that was actually playing that night, and I look and there, behind Green Day, is Anthony's logo, and it said RFYFL. He would do a bunch of shit. He would write Bümklåått lyrics, RFYFL lyrics, and put them on his tags and stuff. There's people who I know who are like, "Oh yeah, I've seen that logo in NY, and it said Bümklåått," or, "I've seen that little guy in Texas."

**Ubaldo:** I've been at a bar in Oakland and I'll look at some stairs or something, and you see they're still up. Or you still see them on a parking meter or something.

**Fernando:** I think we have a big connection with that because of him. He would represent us everywhere because he was part of our circle.

**Todd:** Ferny, did you get arrested for being a coyote?

**Fernando:** Yes.

**Todd:** Could you take us through that?

**Fernando:** It's kind of a long story. I'll give you the short version. I ended up in a fucked up situation where I had to move down to Tijuana. I was fucked up with drugs, all that stuff. Down there, I was pretty much living on the streets with this crazy ex-girlfriend, I was pretty much taking care of her. If I would have just sent her on her way, I would have been fine. I could just put myself in rehab or something.

We'd be walking around the streets of TJ—and for some reason they would know we were American—and come up to us and be like, "Hey, do you want to drive for us? Do you want to work for us?" I was like, "No, I'm never gonna do that. I'd rather just deal with what we have to deal with and that's it." One day, this guy convinces me. He's all, "Come and eat breakfast with me, I know you're struggling right now." I'm like, alright, cool. So he tells me, "The border patrol guy is paid. You'd be helping people across," and I was always like, "Yeah, it's totally helping, right?" He said, "The people wouldn't be hidden. They wouldn't be in any danger. They'd pretty much be sitting right behind you. We'll take you to the border, you drive them across, you drive back, you get paid." It was that easy.

First time, it totally worked just like that. I got in the truck, truck was stolen—I found this out later, trucks were always stolen. The guys were just sitting back, right behind the seats. It wasn't like a twin cab. They'd put two people and just put a blanket over them. Put me in the border. The guy would jump out. I'd already be in the lane. I'd hit the border. Once I'd get to the lane, the guy would just look at me, "U.S. citizen." "Go."

Cross, drop them off in Chula Vista, and then come back. There would be a guy waiting for me in Chula Vista. So I did that ten times, and then the eleventh time I got popped. It was crazy, man. It was insane. I got in trouble. I did close to seventeen months in federal prison, and it was the best thing that could have happened to me because I was so fucked up when it came to the drugs thing that it detoxed me. They sent me to a hospital here, the Alvarado Hospital. I still remember the cop was being an asshole. He's like, "Well, now you're getting a twenty-thousand dollar rehab program paid by the taxpayers." I was like, "Well, cool man," right? "I'm gonna be fucking arrested, so that's not that cool."

**Todd:** There's a downside.

**Fernando:** I spent a week at the hospital. The week when I was there, my feet

were handcuffed together, my arms were handcuffed to the bed, and then I'm kicking drugs, so it was the worst, and there are cops watching me, just laughing at me.

**Todd:** The cops were being dicks to you?

**Fernando:** Oh, totally dicks. Total dicks.

**Rene:** When you say drugs, which do you mean?

**Fernando:** We're talking like, hard drugs: heroin and methadone. So the best part about that was I got to get clean. It finally was to the point where, man, that was so fucked up I'll never do that again. The other times before that that I'd fucked around, it never got bad. It was easy, you know what I mean? "That wasn't that bad, so it doesn't matter if I do that again."

It's been five or six years since I've done anything like that and the whole jail part got me thinking about ninety-nine percent of the people in there were Mexican citizens. Just people trying to get in. I spent the whole time in there just talking to these people and getting to know their stories and it just pissed me off even more about the border. I was like, this is fucked up. These people live their whole life in the United States. Their parents didn't do the right thing, didn't get them a green card, but they get in trouble for doing something—maybe they get pulled over for having a tail light out—boom they get sent to jail or prison.

They do a certain amount of time then they get deported back to Mexico, and they can never come back. A lot of them try to come back the day they get out, and boom they get arrested for another three years. Get out again, same day try to get back to their family, now it's six years. So there are people who are just in that cycle.

**Todd:** They're not even, technically, Mexican citizens.

**Fernando:** No, because they grew up their whole life in the United States. There's so much money being spent to house these people. It's like, okay, you don't want to let them back in, just deport them to Mexico, but get them out of prison. There's no reason to have them in there.

**Todd:** Pulling a 180 so our readers don't get too bummed out... [laughter] George Clinton?

**Ubaldo:** I was driving George Clinton. I was taking him to a radio station to do an interview, and I start hearing a weird noise behind me, like a "tsk, tsk, tsk," so I look in the rear view mirror, and he has a bag of popcorn, just sitting right here.

**Fernando:** Popcorn is crack.

**Ubaldo:** He was totally smoking crack. I couldn't believe it. It was great.

**Fernando:** Didn't he smoke it all the way to the show?

**Ubaldo:** Non-stop, he's a chain crack smoker.

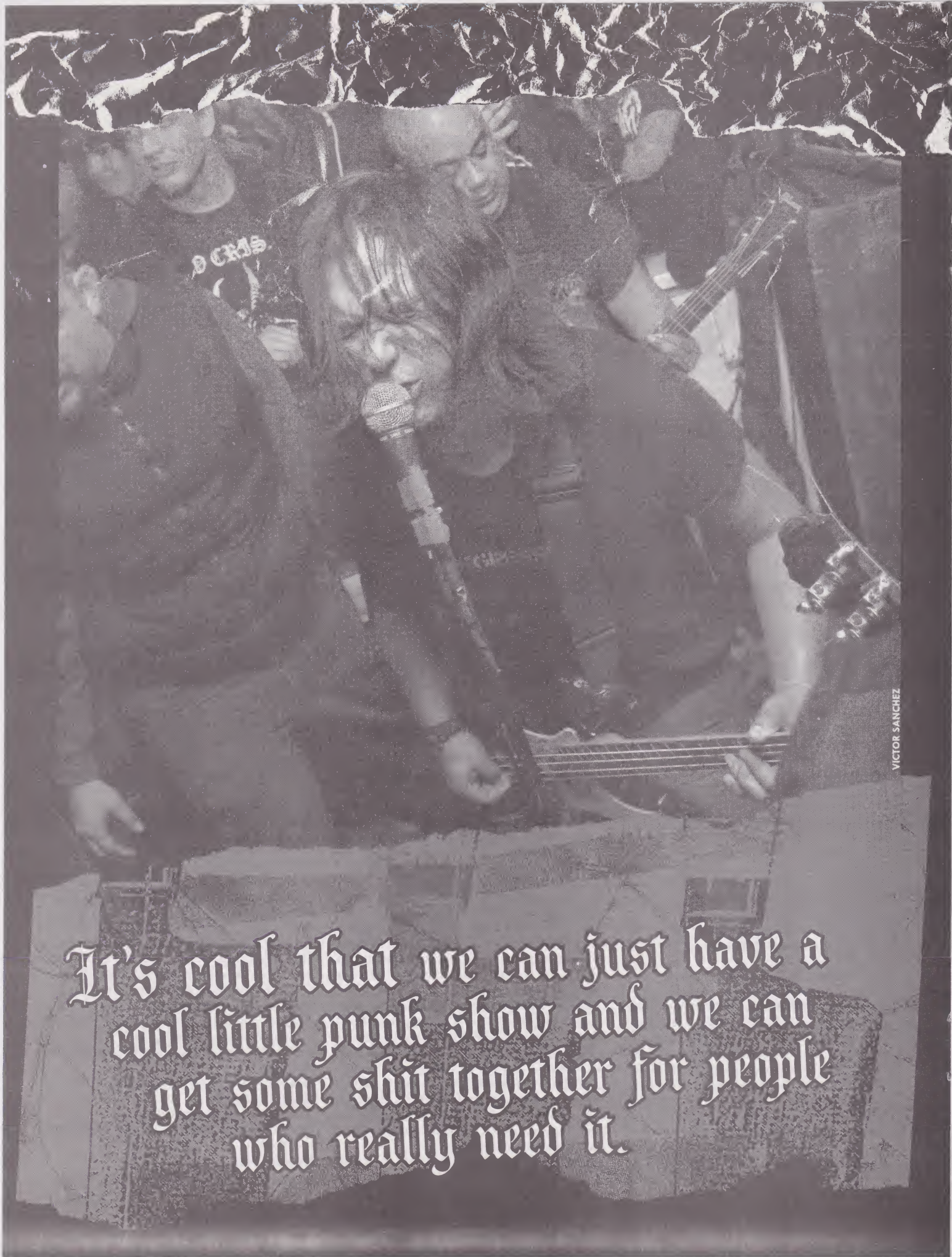
**Rene:** Did he share?

**Ubaldo:** He didn't even share, no.

**Todd:** Was he amped, or was he sort of just flat?

**Ubaldo:** Flat.

**Fernando:** Yeah, it probably evens him out.



VICTOR SANCHEZ

It's cool that we can just have a cool little punk show and we can get some shit together for people who really need it.

**Todd:** Ubaldo, take me through how you got the mayor of San Diego, Jerry Sanders, in a Bümbläätt shirt over his work shirt.

**Ubaldo:** Okay, we had this thing, "Let's have a Bümbläätt company party."

**Fernando:** That whole night was insane.

**Todd:** You guys made that "company party" up, right?

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, just to have fun and get friends together. We brought shirts and swag to give away to friends. It was at Blind Lady and just kind of silly, Christmas time, whatever.

**Fernando:** You know what's crazy about that? That's when we got back together as a full band, original members, for the first time to start playing again.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, we hadn't even played a show yet.

**Fernando:** I guess Mr. Sanders is a big fan of good beer.

**Todd:** I mean, the picture that I saw, he's red faced.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, he was pretty loaded.

**Fernando:** But you know who's cool though? His wife. His wife was just this old rocker lady. She's like, "Oh yeah, we go to The Casbah. We go here, we go there," so she was way cool. So we're like, "Oh, cool. Our band is here and we're playing The Casbah."

**Ubaldo:** They're all, "We love the Casbah!" I'm all, "Here, we want to give you this shirt." He said, "I'm gonna put it on right now."

**Fernando:** And we just started taking pictures with him.

**Ubaldo:** We came over and hung out.

**Fernando:** But the best is there's a picture of me with Jerry Sanders and he's all, "What's gonna happen when he finds out he took a picture with a known coyote?" That's gonna fuck up his whole shit. [laughter]

**Rene:** If I could, I'd like to get back to what you said just now. I'm creepishly interested in the Bümbläätt lore. You mentioned that party was when you guys decided to get back together to start playing again. I do remember that horrible year when I was like, "No more Bümbläätt?" How many line up changes have there been? Do you feel it's almost fate that, in the end, it's the same members together again?

**Oscar:** I think everything happens for a reason. There have been members who have really done a lot for the band, not only musically but personally, so nothing has been in vain for us. Change hasn't been good nor bad. It just is and has gotten us to where we are right now, but I think we still have a long ways to go—never ending, you could say.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, I think it is fate. We've had our ups and downs with members. We're growing up together too. You go through things and shit changes. We've had like, what, Danny Moreno, George, German...

**Fernando:** Three lineups that had an extra person. There was a lineup which was just as a three piece, and then there's the original line up, so there's been five total.

**Ubaldo:** Right, it's back to the original. It's like, I don't know, no one really lasted. Everyone thinks we're assholes, but it's not... we're just... when it comes to practice,

we get together once a week for one hour, so we have to bring out the best that we can.

**Fernando:** It's not the easiest thing to get together.

**Ubaldo:** Don't come in with feelings, or they'll get hurt. It's just like, boom. I've been there with my son, sitting there at practice and I fucked up and got shitted on. It's just like that and I didn't take it personally. It's just like, "Fuck, yeah, I've got to step it up." It's like that, but a lot of people don't work like that. They fold easy and they think, "Oh this guy's an asshole!" But, after it's done it's, "Let's go have some beers." It's just on instinct and that's how we work.

**Rene:** So it sounds like you guys are definitely, ala Greg Ginn workhorses when you're there, the unspoken clock-in at the garage door. I constantly hear you guys referred to as a really solid live act. I mean, through all the years that I've been going to your guys' shows and all the lineups, a Bümbläätt show still maintains that level of expectation. It doesn't matter if you guys are playing to ten people, a hundred people, or literally thousands of people like in that YouTube video I found of you guys in Mexico City. How do you guys manage to "bring it" every time when the mics go out, no one is there, or something goes wrong?

**Todd:** Is that something self-enforced?

**Ubaldo:** No, it happens on an instinct, but it doesn't just happen. That's why we practice.

**Todd:** Do you enforce that live? "Don't come and just kind of zone out. You have to be present, be in the moment."?

**Fernando:** From playing for so long, we just expect that from each other now.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, it's just this unspoken thing that just happens. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that we've been active this whole time. We've never stopped.

**Todd:** It's a muscle, it's a memory thing too.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, it's active, so that could be it. The only time we've really stopped was when 9/11 happened, when the border was too crazy to cross. That was around four months of not seeing each other. We've always—even just talking on the phone, discussing things. All those little things are important—emailing, making sure we're getting back to each other.

**Todd:** Stay on top of your shit, right.

**Rene:** Speaking of 9/11, I had friends who literally had to drop out of college. I had friends get fired from work. I had friends get dumped by their girlfriends. It affected everyone. How did it affect the band? Do you think it will ever be the same in terms of the free flow of information, people, and pedestrian traffic?

**Ubaldo:** Well, it was a disaster. We just gave up. We didn't break up, but we were just like, "Dude, we just can't play." I'm not going to wait four hours to cross the border, each way. I think it's better now because it's more filtered when crossing. They know you're a band. They're not going to bullshit with you, "Yeah, go ahead." Before, it was like, "Oh, you can't go through here. You need this paper and blah, blah, blah" to cross. They

would just make it hard on you for no reason, but now it's more like, "Yep, you're playing a show tonight. Cool, cross."

**Fernando:** Recently, for that Sin Fronteras Fest that I did, I went down there to drop off some money that we'd made for them.

**Todd:** To the charity?

**Fernando:** Right, to the charity. I had a bass cabinet the size of a fridge, a head, and a bass, right? I remember one time they told me—and this is going into Mexico—you can have one amp. If not, you have to have your sheet with all your serial numbers. It has to get signed by this side of the border and that side of the border. We'd figured that out before. We'd made copies. We're on top of that.

But the border patrol guy had told me one amp, so I'm heading down there early because it's a Sunday. The third day of that show was that Sunday and I didn't want to get to the border all late, so I go in there and they pull me aside because I had an amp. I say, "Well, it's mine, I just have one. It's huge, yeah, I know, but it's mine." Then the guy changed it to, "Oh, no, you need one amp that you can carry." I was like, "What?" I show him the flyer and explain I'm going down there and have to get this money to them. I didn't say money. I just said, "I have some stuff I have to do with them." At first they wanted me to turn around and go back. Then finally they pull me aside. He just comes up and says, "It looks like we're just gonna have to charge you for that. But, you're not going to get a receipt." I was thinking, before they start to say like, "A hundred bucks," I'm just gonna say, "I've got twenty bucks. That's it." He's all, "Put it on your seat right there." So I put it on the seat. Then he brings a girl cop over. She grabs it and scrunches it up and puts it in her boobs and shit, and then they're like, "Okay, thank you." So they're still doing that shit, man.

**Todd:** Let's go a bit happier again. Okay Ubaldo, take me through the Nachos and Jäger party.

**Ubaldo:** Oh man, yikes. We were just on our way to Punk Rock Bowling and I had come across a nacho machine for really cheap. I was at a Smart and Final and I was waiting in line. There was a pallet there while I was waiting to pay and I was like, "Whoah, nacho machine." I asked the guy, "How much is this?"—because it was on clearance and nobody could find out. It was the only one. They called the manager and stuff, and were like, "Well, it's opened, so, twenty-five dollars?" I picked it up. It was a good deal. I went home and looked it up and it was worth like \$350. Anyway, same thing with the Jäger machine. I came across one for free. My ex-wife's aunt gave it to me. She won it at some bar. I don't know what she did.

**Todd:** Whatever lewd act...

**Ubaldo:** So I had those and I don't know why, I thought, "I'm going to bring those to Vegas." We had them in our rooms set up, we got some napkins, and were like, "Let's make flyers and have a party tonight." You have time to kill at Punk Rock Bowling, so



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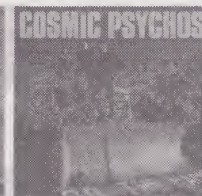
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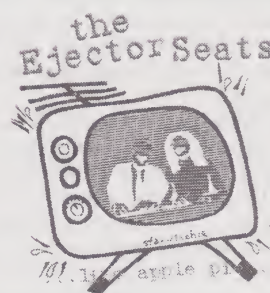
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# "Who the fuck is Little Debbie?"



DONOTTHEDEAD

we were at the bar down there at Sam's Town and started handing out fliers to strangers and friends. I had my friend Bearpaw—I guess we did plan the party, because I made him some Hulkamania shirts. He had the shirt and was working security, and it just got crazy. Beds were fucking up on the wall. I actually had to leave after that party. I was going nuts. It was too much. I couldn't handle it.

**Todd:** And no one could poop for like two days after that.

**Ubaldo:** Someone got a tattoo of it, too.

**Rene:** Oh yeah, I heard about this tattoo. What does it look like?

**Ubaldo:** It was a chip, dipped in nacho, and on the chip it said "Nacho Jäger 2009."

**Fernando:** Yeah, and now Bümklåätt shows are known for having the nacho machine out.

**Ubaldo:** On special occasions we'll bring it. Nachos are good.

**Fernando:** The merch will be on the table and so are the nachos. For free. We don't charge 'em. I think that's why people go to our shows still, man.

**Rene:** We actually touched back on this earlier and it's a personal curiosity of mine—I do understand—like he mentioned when Todd brought up the anarcho lyrics, that this band almost started as a reaction to that; you guys wanting to be in a band that wasn't spouting things that they weren't really backing up. At what point in time did you guys, being in different projects, say "Let's be Bümklåätt?"

**Oscar:** It started off as a side project from

this old band that Adrian and I used to play in called Discordia. Because of other ideas that didn't fit in that band, we decided to do this one. But a few months passed and Discordia broke up, so we just focused all our attention on Bümklåätt, which I think was for the best because we had more freedom in writing the songs and the riffs. It was like we had no label. We just played what we liked.

**Ubaldo:** Well, back then we were just booking shows. I wasn't even in the band at that time. I was in Los Cagados.

**Rene:** Can you translate that for us?

**Ubaldo:** Los Cagados? That means the shitted on ones.

**Fernando:** What was happening was RFYFL was playing and Oscar and Adrian, their band, Discordia, broke up in Tijuana and I was really close with them. I'd go pick them up at the border for every show in San Diego. They'd stay at my house. Ubaldo was good friends with them, and then when they broke up, they're like, "Hey man, let's start something. It doesn't have to be really serious. We just want it to be a different sound. We just want it to be..." like you said, "it doesn't have to be about anarcho, d-beat lyrics. It can just be about life and stuff, and we want to do something like that for fun, for us." So, to me, it was no problem being like, "Yeah man. I'll do it. I don't care if I have this other band that is serious too. Well, whatever, "serious." Not to us, but yeah.

**Rene:** There was a lot of drugs involved in that band.

**Fernando:** Yeah, a lot of drugs involved in that band. A lot.

**Rene:** I'd always meet you guys at the border and you guys would be like, "Oh, have we met?" and it was like, "Yeah, five times now. Hey, you can lean on me."

**Fernando:** That was that band. So, RFYFL's drummer Jeff moved to Portland and the band broke up. For me, it was, "I'll go on Bümklåätt" and the TJ guys were already all go. Ubaldo wasn't even playing in Diablos anymore so we started hitting it, recording.

**Rene:** Okay, so we've been talking a lot about, "Oh, we're from San Diego," "the San Diego part of the band...." You guys are not fucking from San Diego. I'm not from fucking San Diego. We all came up....

**Ubaldo:** In Chula Vista!

**Fernando:** Chula Vista.

**Rene:** Do you feel that the Chula Vista punk, and especially the hardcore scene gets overlooked due to being literally sandwiched between bigger scenes such as Tijuana and San Diego?

**Ubaldo:** Definitely, I mean, dude Vinyl Communications had Operation Ivy playing there on Hilltop Drive. There was a lot of things like Amenity, The Zeros, Unbroken—one of the biggest straight edge bands—and that record label that was based there had Cringer. Cringer is one of the founders of all of this pop punk stuff that's going on now. I think Chula Vista is very important in the punk scene, when it comes down to the history of it.

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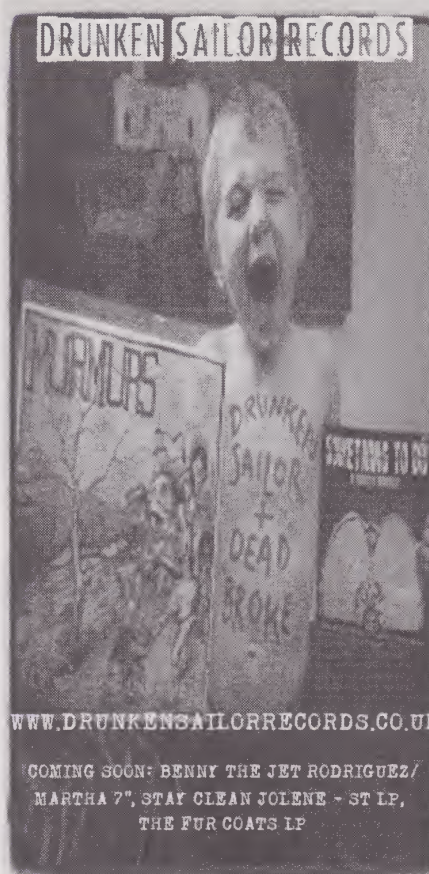
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**Todd:** I talked to Ken from Prank and he said to ask Adrian about Little Debbies. [laughter]

**Ubaldo:** It's just like whenever we're on the road or whatever, we'll be gassing up and you go into the little shop to get a snack or whatever and he always would come back with Little Debbies. Hey, when you're on the road you're always kind of broke, so Little Debbies always has deals. You always get two for one with the orange sticker. So a lot of times it'll be, "Have you talked to Little Debs yet. Has she confirmed the show?"

**Fernando:** It's funny because we'll be talking—and one time Ubaldo said it in front of my girlfriend—and my girlfriend's just like, staring at me, because we're talking like normal. "Hey man, what's up with Little Debbie?" and she's just like, "Who the fuck is Little Debbie?"

**Todd:** Ferny, let's loop back to Sin Fronteras Fest. Why did you start it?

**Fernando:** That's definitely something that happened due to me being in federal prison. When I got out, I started looking into a lot of stuff that had to do with what's happening to these people when they're getting sent back to Mexico.

**Todd:** Right, and how fucked up Mexico is because of America's treatment of Mexico.

**Fernando:** Exactly, exactly. All of that. It's definitely related to that and I had been planning it for a while, just making sure I could figure it out. I talked to my mom a lot about it, because, growing up, I remember her always being like, "Get all your clothes ready that you don't want anymore. We're going to go donate it." So, I found this place.

**Rene:** By my house!

**Fernando:** By his house. Casa Del Migrante it's called, and I thought the place was cool. I went and checked it out. They need help. Everything is volunteer run there, and they're very nice. So the first one, I decided to do it, got everything together, and was like, "We'll see what happens."

Honestly, I thought I'd get a couple bags of donation, a couple of grocery store bags, and maybe like fifty bucks. First time we did it, I got five hundred dollars to give to them and a truckload of clothes. Show up there and the best part was as soon as I pull up, there were guys standing outside that had either just gotten released from there—because they give them two weeks, to make sure that there are still beds for new people coming in—or they were waiting for a bed.

And as soon as I opened up my car, they came running over and were like "Dude, I just need a pair of pants." I remember giving them some pants and then volunteers from the place came out and got all the stuff. They were just stoked. It made me happy man. I was like, "Fuck yeah. This is awesome. This is what these people need." There's so much need for stuff like that. It's cool that we can just have a cool little punk show with some bands and friends and we can get some shit together for people who really need it.

**Todd:** And you see it, in that one-on-one relationship. It's very intimate.

**Fernando:** Yeah, especially when it was those guys who were on the streets. They weren't looking for me to give them something to sell. They really need a pair of pants, and they were just stoked on it, man. So this year was the second year. It was a lot bigger—got

close to a thousand dollars. But if it wasn't for The Vibrators needing a show—one of my buddies, Ziggy, who books shows needed help because their show had gotten cancelled. I was like, "Okay, we'll throw them on."

**Todd:** When I saw your mission statement for the festival, I was like, "What border are The Vibrators next to? Ireland?"

**Fernando:** They were way cool about it. They were stoked about supporting it, but they also had a manager. They needed money, so four hundred dollars ended up going to them. I was like, man, I'm just going to pay 'em. They needed a show. I did my buddy a favor, and that's that, so we ended up getting six hundred dollars, but what we ended up getting this time was three carloads full of clothes and two computers. They were way stoked on the computers. A friend of ours who runs this place out in Barrio Logan got me the computers. Next year we're going to do it again. It's going to be one in Mexico, one in San Diego, and less bands so it's not too much of a headache.

**Ubaldo:** There's a rumor that Black Fork might play.

**Fernando:** Dead And Gone might play. Some old school bands. We'll see. I'm glad we've done it and it's been working out.

**Todd:** It's great that you have a conduit where you can actually see the immediate effect of it. Sometimes I feel like if people don't have the charity already lined up beforehand, it's just kind of hard, that the money has a way of slipping away.

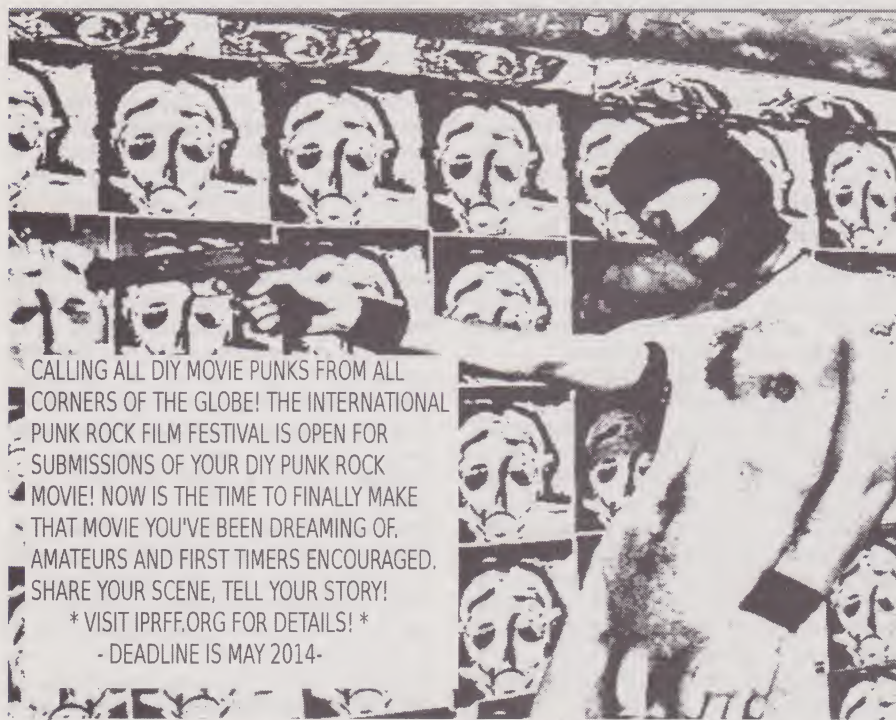
**Fernando:** I feel like sometimes you're just mailing a check to somebody and hoping they do something right with it, but Rene will tell you, he knows exactly where it's at. It's not a good neighborhood right there?

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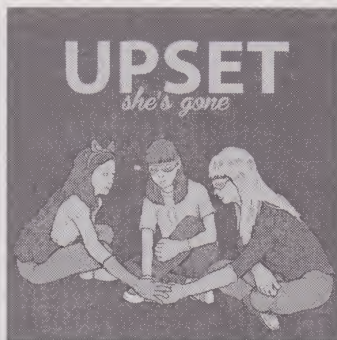
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**Rene:** That's my neighborhood. I'll tell you one thing about those guys. There's a misconception that they're all drunks and drug addicts or whatever, but those guys regulate in that community. If someone's been there over a week and are just getting drunk all day—people in America might not understand this—but they get jumped. If someone's selling drugs right in front, they get jumped. If someone's tagging around there, they get jumped. If someone's stealing, they get jumped. Those guys, when they can leave, they do leave. I've been living in that neighborhood since I was twelve years old. I've never seen the same guy for over a month. They're on that corner, they're looking for work, they're looking to cross, they're looking to get the fuck out of there. It is not skid row.

**Fernando:** A lot of these people get caught at the border. They're not from Tijuana, but that's where they get let go, so they need something fast and in those two weeks they're making calls. Hopefully, their family can get them over here. Maybe they'll try to cross again. Who knows? This last time I went in there, I explained to them that this next year we're going to have a show there in Tijuana. I asked if there was any way they could bring them, like the people who are staying there and stuff. The guy was like, "No."

**Ubaldo:** It'd be like when the Stones got the Hells Angels to do security, not that we're The Stones.

**Fernando:** It was cool though because the main guys running it and a couple other volunteers said, "We'll definitely go. Just let us know."

**Rene:** I go to church there on Sundays. Every Sunday that I'm home. I just said that out loud. [laughter]

**Rene:** For my mom... What's the most memorable show you guys have played and why?

**Ubaldo:** Most memorable was with The Varukers in Mexico City.

**Rene:** I've seen this video on the internet. How many people were there going apeshit? Thousands?

**Ubaldo:** Man, there was like, I swear, three or four thousand people. It was this huge warehouse. Imagine an empty Costco, just packed. We were already on the road with them, and we got there when the show had already started. I swear man, we got mobbed when we got off the van. We had to help them to get in. We were like, "Woah, that was crazy." We walk into the warehouse and it's just thousands of punks, it was crazy. You would see a sea of mohawks and colored hair. You felt the presence of the crowd. It was tough to play, kind of scary, very intimidating, but you've just got to bust it.

**Todd:** How did they respond?

**Ubaldo:** Good, very good. In Mexico City we've always had a killer time. We love going there. We're working on going there with Subhumans.

**Rene:** What is it that's kept you guys going for almost fourteen years?

**Ubaldo:** Damn, it's been fourteen years?

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**Rene:** According to your Bandcamp, you started in 2000, and I was sixteen, so it sounds about right.

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, we did. I know that, but...wow.

**Rene:** Yeah, because I remember when I first met your brother, he was like, "Oh, cool, you're into punk. My brother just started this band. You'll really like it."

the energy, but mostly we just do it because we like it.

**Fernando:** I was gone. I left town for like four or five years. I moved, so when I came back and started joining up, it just restarted everything again. So, to me, it's awesome right now. I feel like we're all on the same level when it comes to what we want. Before,

don't tour. I think that's part of what's kind of kept us together. For us, seven days, that's a "tour." We have friends that will say, "Oh, we just did a little seven-day thing." But, going back to reciprocity, we have friends worldwide.

**Rene:** I'm only mentioning this because you guys brought it up earlier: Oscar and

## ...but I think we still have a long ways to go—never ending, you could say.

**Todd:** Rene, tell them the story about the first time you saw them.

**Rene:** Okay, I'm not sure that this was the very first time I saw you guys play, but this was the "Skitsystem House," named because Skitsystem played there, once, in some crazy neighborhood past El Centro. It was my third date with my wife who I've been with since I turned seventeen. We'd finally gotten around to the making out stage in her car when there's some loud thudding on the front windshield, and I open my eyes to see a beautiful large man with his mouth open, wagging his tongue at us, who then proceeds to knock on the passenger door window—which I, of course, willingly roll down because I'm a fan of this guy—to hand me a copy of this 7".

**Ubaldo:** Oh man, shit, I don't remember that. I must have been on a good one.

**Rene:** That was the first Bümblåått show that I remember, but I know I'd seen you guys before.

**Fernando:** Shit, I don't even remember that.

**Rene:** It was a while ago. It was good times. So what has kept you guys going since then? Because it used to be—it's so easy to do this, the shows are here...

**Ubaldo:** Well, it's never been easy. I don't know what the answer is to that. I just know that we like what we do.

**Todd:** And also coming from a little bit removed perspective, it seems like you guys really don't believe your own bullshit. It's just like, you play good music, you show up, you play, you help other people out. But you're not doing it for purely crappy self promotional reasons.

**Fernando:** It hasn't gotten to our head or anything

**Ubaldo:** And we're lazy.

**Todd:** I don't believe that. There's a difference between being lazy and being, "We can do this once a week, but we're there for an hour," instead of not doing it for six months and thinking you're doing it all the time.

**Ubaldo:** That's like a whole other thing. We don't write music or practice to be all, "Oh, I hope people like that." It's kind of for us, we like it, and then we'll share it. If people like it, that's their business. I mean it's cool, that's rad. That's lovely. We love

there were issues where some people wanted to go on tour, some people can't go on tour. Now it's like, "Okay, now we can or we can figure it out." We're all at the same place.

**Rene:** I'd actually like to bring that up. It's always been in my mind, that if you guys were a little younger, a little whiter, weren't married, didn't have kids, toured regularly...

**Fernando:** I know exactly where you're going with that because when we were, well, I guess, younger, when the first 7" came out, skinnier definitely. Actually, when the 10" *Ciegos* came out, we had opportunities to go on tour across the United States. Bands have invited us and stuff like that, but because of the fact that there were kids involved and other things—but for example, me, I was ready, so I couldn't understand what they were saying, like, "Well, we can't" or Adrian saying, "I can't leave my job like that."

I think now it's a lot better, because I understand now. I can't just leave my job right now. I understand you guys can't just leave your kids and stuff like that. Now, do I think things could've been different if we could've gone and done all that stuff? Yeah, maybe. But I feel like right now we're enjoying what happened since we didn't do that. Now, Prank is putting out our record, where like before he wanted us to, but he also wanted us to make sure we were gonna be able to tour and be able to do that, and at those points we couldn't say "Yeah."

**Rene:** So, in the long run, it's helped you guys in terms of longevity, stability, really building a core fanbase, and having nothing but recordings that you can be really proud of.

**Fernando:** What's cool now is that people know us in different places and it's not because we hit their town, it's because they got our record. We're on the map and stuff like that.

**Rene:** Have you guys felt that reciprocity when you go through other people's towns?

**Ubaldo:** Oh yeah, man. If we go through like Seattle or Austin, it's nuts.

**Fernando:** Up the West Coast we're set up, man. I think our next plan is we really want to hit the East Coast because we haven't.

**Ubaldo:** It got to the point where we just had to accept it. We're not that band. We

Adrian, the artsy guys, they kind of write the lyrics, do the art and whatnot, born and bred TJ guys. Tell us who Oscar and Adrian are to you. I definitely have always thought of you guys as the yin and yang. Oscar and Adrian, sober handshake, "What did you do this week?" Ubaldo and Fernando, like, "I can help carry you."

**Fernando:** For me, I'll say this—they're both badass musicians. Adrian's one of the best drummers I've ever seen, let alone played with. He's a fucking beast, man. He's awesome. He rips.

**Ubaldo:** I always describe Adrian as this wave that we get to ride. It's very hard to come across a good drummer, and I'm always grateful and feel lucky that we get to jam with him. It's like this indescribable thing, playing live.

**Matt:** I have one question. Do you think Awesome Fest is racist?

**Ubaldo:** Oh, are you referring to his comment? [laughter]

**Fernando:** I get an email the next day from some girl I don't know. She's all, "I just want to say that what you said onstage was the best thing of the whole weekend," and I was like, "What the fuck did I say?" I was like, "I don't think it was me." She was like, "No, it was," and reminded me so I was like, "Oh, no. I just said that as a fucking joke. We've gotta have fun with it: Awesome Fiesta."

**Ubaldo:** Yeah, we had so many friends coming in from out of town. We love it. I was busting Marty's balls. We're just ball busters, man. It's all in fun.

**Rene:** So what is your ultimate vision for Bümblåått? Where do you see it in, say, four years?

**Oscar:** I guess in my personal vision for the band, we would keep playing what we play, which is what we all like, and keep moving forward, not to be still in the same style. I guess it works for a lot of bands, but for me to play music is about growth, about expanding other fields without losing the essence of the band, but always experimenting and not being close minded about what could be...



# LOW CULTURE

Intro by Todd Taylor

Interview by Daryl, Todd Taylor, and Kevin Dunn

Transcription by Matthew Hart

Photos by Ryan Maddox, Paul Silver,  
and Rachel Murray Framingheddu

Layout by Lauren Measure



**N**o one's gonna give a shit in five, ten years if you have this record or that one or whether you listened to this band or that one.

I mean, really, who cares?

The only right answer should be "you." You should care—about something. Because in the end you're dying alone, either in a box or as dust.

An endless barrage of messages telling you what to care about are broadcast on TV, through tiny glowing screens in your palm or at your computer. Screens, screens, screens. Those messages radiate into your life, glow from your bed, seep into your past. They're the size of atoms, in your toothpaste, squeezed out and rubbed into your teeth and gums. You become the reluctant monster. You're the end product of these unstoppable broadcasts—a bundle of anxiety, self-doubt, depthless information, and endless distractions. Surface noise becomes static; static decays into pixel fatigue.

All is not lost. All is not fucked. There's an antidote. Get in on the creation side of the equation. Make stuff. Actively participate. Don't be satisfied with all of this consuming and being consumed. I'm not saying kill your TV. I'm saying don't invite your TV to kill you..

For me, independent DIY punk music's the visible tip of a deeper "life iceberg." It's something we rally around and celebrate. We get stupid and sweaty and momentarily forget the outside noise. It helps us not want to kill ourselves—music as mental health therapy.

With all that in mind, it's all the more impressive that Low Culture has quickly developed into one of the best active punk bands in the world today since they're from Las Cruces, New Mexico. Cruces is a mañana town. "Tomorrow, we'll do it." But tomorrow never comes for most of its inhabitants. It's endless sand through an hourglass, time slipping away, re-runs to re-watch. (New Mexico was a state for fourteen years before it had an official flag. Its first flag stole Florida's nickname.) Low

Culture defies its geography. They create music that's jumpy, itchy, catchy, anxious, well-worn, and beautiful. Their music shares a strong sonic equivalence to bands two of its members were previously in: Shang-A-Lang and Marked Men.

You know how pictures of sunsets and fireworks never look as good as the real thing happening in front of you? It's the scale—the wide open sky in analog, the air pressure, the live audience, the taste of the atmosphere. All of that is missing on a flat, sterile plane, no matter how high the resolution.

Low Culture's music reminds me of these things. A real New Mexico sunset free of technology streaking across it. It's fireworks bursting uncontained on a flat tablet; the smoke, sweat, and salt of their music lingering long after the music stops.

**Chris**—Vocals, Guitar  
**Sam**—Drums  
**Joe**—Lead guitar  
**Cade**—Lead bass

**Daryl:** Did you guys name your band after a Dan Padilla song?

**Chris:** Dan Padilla named a song after us, I think. I got really freaked out when I got the masters for that record, because I was listening to it in my car and it came up as Low Culture and I was like, "This isn't fucking Low Culture!" It was flattering, but maybe one had nothing to do with the other. I don't know.

**Daryl:** I guess it was a segueway into the name of the band. I don't feel like you guys necessarily are trying to triumph what you consider low culture, but you still named your band that.

**Todd:** He's saying as opposed to high culture.

**Cade:** It's just a weird concept to have high culture and low culture. I feel like maybe punk rock people feel that's low culture, but there's a lot more to it. I don't know.

**Chris:** I think I came up with the name. I honestly don't know why we named it Low Culture. When I asked Cade and Sam to start, Shang-A-Lang was breaking up and shit. — Another melodic punk band, you guys wanna play? I was kind of thinking about how fucking stupid pretty much everything is. We're kind of culturally bankrupt, I guess—in a lot of ways.

**Todd:** "We" being who?

**Chris:** Everyone. [laughs] There's nothing

**Sam:** Class. Thank you, yeah. You can still have a lot of money, but you can still be low culture, because your life is kind of—well, boring. [laughs] To me at least.

**Todd:** So Sam and Cade, how do you guys know Chris and Joe?

**Cade:** I guess just from being in Las Cruces.

**Chris:** Sam was in this band that fucking hated me. [laughs]

**Sam:** Half the band hated you. I was cool with you.

**Chris:** I remember back when there was the Las Cruces message board. A couple of them were bragging about rubbing their fucking nuts all over my microphones or something.



**Cade:** Right.

**Daryl:** Or just culture in general. [laughs]

**Cade:** *Riiight*. I like the name. I felt it was interesting. The whole concept of what low culture is considered. That's why I liked it.

**Joe:** If you Google "low culture" and go to images, it's a lot of low rider culture, apparently.

**Cade:** Oh, really?

**Chris:** Sweet.

**Cade:** I was thinking it was stuff like reality shows and...

**Joe:** Miley Cyrus twerking.

**Cade:** Larry the Cable Guy.

**Todd:** "You smell that?"

**Joe:** I don't know if you guys have heard?

**Daryl:** Oh, *Larry the Cable Guy*. Not the Jim Carrey movie.

interesting for a lot of people anymore. People go to work, come home, watch television, go to sleep... That's their entire life. Reading tabloid magazines, fucking being obsessed with other people's lives—who don't even matter and haven't done anything really of consequence.

**Todd:** So let me get this right, that bothers you? [laughs]

**Chris:** It's an homage. [laughs] It's my tribute...to everything good in the world. I don't know, I'm not articulating it well.

**Sam:** That's kind of cool, because instead of it sounding like an actual status, it's more of a psychological status because you pretty much described people from every single...

**Daryl:** Class.

[laughs] They *hated* me. I don't know why.

**Cade:** For me, when the Dirt—which was a record store that was open in Cruces...that was like...

**Chris:** '03, '04.

**Cade:** Jeez, that was a while ago.

**Chris:** You were just a baby.

**Cade:** I was a baby. I was like fourteen.

**Joe:** Is that when you had bondage pants? [laughs]

**Cade:** I did. I did. Mesh shirts...

**Joe:** Wasn't it white bondage pants?

**Cade:** I had some white ones, yeah. I wanted to stand out. [laughs]

**Chris:** I remember you interviewing me for some school newspaper.

**Cade:** Yeah, when you were in *Eat This!*

**Chris:** It was outside of the University House. I remember feeling like a total dick, because you were like, "What does the local music scene mean to you? Why do you do this?" I was like, "I don't give a fuck about the local music scene..."

**Daryl:** This was when you were in The Answer Lies.

**Chris:** I think so. I was like, "It's about community. Fuck the music." Or something—being super punk and stupid.

**Cade:** I was stoked, though. [laughs] I was like, "Yeah! This is good stuff!"

**Sam:** You had a glow for days after that interview.

**Cade:** I started going to shows at the Dirt and then, yeah, of course, The Answer Lies was playing so eventually I met him and Jason and Andy. Shows at the Uni House. Then there was that one time I tried to play drums for Shang-A-Lang. [Daryl laughs] I was too nervous.

**Chris:** He wasn't very good.

[Everybody "awwws"]

we do?" So Low Culture happened.

**Todd:** So do guys feel like wussies now?

**Cade:** What do you mean?

**Todd:** Musically.

**Cade:** No, not at all. [laughs]

**Todd:** I mean, you got your hardcore band, you've got your black metal...

**Cade:** The black metal guys are such nerds. [laughs]

**Sam:** They're the best DMs (dungeon masters) though, right? [laughs]

**Cade:** It's true.

**Joe:** They run such a great campaign.

**Sam:** The best campaigns.

**Chris:** Sometimes when I bring a song to practice, I kind of get worried because I think you're going to think it's...

**Joe:** "...it's not long enough, first of all."

**Chris:** "Oh, here's my new song..."

**Daryl:** "It's not about pagan rituals."

**Cade:** There's no burning sage.

**Chris:** The black metal dude they were in a band with was fucking great, actually.

**Daryl:** Hardcore is pop.

**Chris:** It is. I tell people all the time, people that are like, "I don't like hardcore because it has no hooks." I'm like, "Hardcore has hooks."

**Daryl:** Good hardcore has hooks.

**Chris:** That's true.

**Cade:** I think for me, with the style I play, because when I first started playing bass was with that black metal band. That's the first style I learned. When we first started Low Culture, I was still doing that tremolo stuff...

**Todd:** What's that?

**Cade:** Just like a constant...

**Chris:** I don't know either.

**Daryl:** It's like *up* there. [laughs]

**Cade:** I don't know, it's just kind of playing really fast and have it droning. I feel like my bass style is...

**Daryl:** Punchier.

**Chris:** You also play with your fingers, which is weird for a punk bassist.

**Cade:** For me, it feels more natural to do

# I was kind of thinking about how fucking stupid pretty much everything is. We're kind of culturally bankrupt, I guess

**Joe:** You never called him back?

**Chris:** Well, I called him—just not about that.

**Chris:** I'm not sure how well Joe knew Sam and Cade before Low Culture. It was weird. Joe was moving back to Cruces and Low Culture had already started. We'd done the demo, we were about to do our first show, and Joe moved back the week before. He came into Cruces and got beers with me before the show.

**Todd:** And you kicked out the other guy. [laughs]

**Chris:** I was kind of getting buzzed. I was just like, "Dude, do you want to be in Low Culture?" So, we showed up and I was like, "Hey guys, this is Joe..."

**Joe:** I sort of knew them both, but not as well then.

**Chris:** Then after we practiced, it went pretty well and I took Sam out to my car while Cade and Joe were talking. I played him *Marked Men* for the first time. [laughs] I was like, "*He was in this band!*"

**Cade:** Before we were in Low Culture, Chris, Sam, and I were in Total Jock—which was like our hardcore band. Me and Sam met when we had a black metal band with this other guy. We went to Total Jock and then after Shang-A-Lang broke up—the guitarist of Total Jock left. So we were like, "What do

**Sam:** He's amazing. He's a great guitar player.

**Chris:** One time I walked into the Trainyard (All-ages space in Las Cruces) and he was practicing with his other band. There were candles everywhere. All the lights were off. He got really embarrassed. It was December and he was like, "I thought these candles would warm us up." [laughs]

**Cade:** "I was just *cold*."

**Chris:** I know what you're doing. [laughs]

**Daryl:** Do you guys feel like you've brought anything from your hardcore/metal projects into Low Culture?

**Sam:** Definitely.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Joe:** I think so.

**Cade:** I think so, too.

**Todd:** That twenty-minute solo.

**Cade:** Exactly.

**Joe:** Well, the metal.

**Cade:** We bring the metal. [laughs]

**Sam:** I think it's cool. Instead of having a bunch of people who are like, "We're strictly melodic or pop punk," you take a little bit of that and you mix it with other genres.

**Chris:** I think that when Cade brings a song to the table, it's definitely more hardcore, because that's where he's more comfortable writing.

**Cade:** I don't know how to write pop. It's weird.

that than with a pick. I think that's one of the reasons I could never play guitar. "What is this thing? I don't need this." I just like playing with my fingers. When we first started, because it was poppier, I felt like I was going to a more surfy kind of style. I felt that was the middle ground between the black metal and...

**Sam:** Surf, duh!

**Joe:** That's what I've always said, too. [laughs]

**Sam:** Dick Dale was obviously a big fan of black metal.

**Cade:** He probably made it.

**Daryl:** Do you guys feel like you've taken anything from Low Culture back into your hardcore bands that I know you guys still play in?

**Cade:** Definitely.

**Chris:** They've gotten way better.

**Cade:** I felt I learned a lot. Playing metal and then going to this poppier punk kind of stuff—they're two totally different worlds and you're going for two totally different things.

**Todd:** What are you going for?

**Cade:** In which one?

**Todd:** Give me each one.

**Cade:** If you're going metal, you want it heavy, ugly, and gross.

**Todd:** Dragons and shit.



RYAN MADDOX

**Cade:** Exactly. If you're doing poppier punk stuff, you want it catchy, really energetic, and fun. I felt there were elements of the songwriting in each different one—I learned different things in each genre that I could take to the other ones.

**Chris:** And then Sam speeds everything up after hardcore practice. [laughs]

**Cade:** Which I love. As fast as we can.

**Kevin:** How do the songwriting responsibilities work in Low Culture?

**Chris:** Everybody brings things to the table. There's Joe's songs, there's my songs, there's Cade's songs. We all kind of work them out. I don't think there's ever been an instance where we've been like, "Perfect. Ok. No changes." Everyone has input.

**Sam:** Not only that, but there's never like, "I want you do this, so do it."

**Joe:** There's suggestions.

**Chris:** Yeah, that's actually been one of the really cool things about playing in this band. Sam is so open to suggestions. You'll be like, "Hey, *doom doom doom*." We don't know drum speak... [laughs]

**Sam:** I don't know drum speak, so it's perfect.

**Chris:** And he gets it. And he does it. And we're like, "Is that okay?" And he's always like, "Yeah, dude. That's fucking great."

**Joe:** What I think happened with Low Culture that I think is pretty cool—for me, I guess—is coming from the Marked Men, I wrote two songs for that band. There was no reason to ever bring anything to the table. [laughs] I remember one time, years and years ago, when I lived with Jeff (Burke), I'd be like, "Jeff, check this out. This is pretty cool." And he'd be like, "Yeah, yeah. Keep working on it." [laughs] He wasn't being mean. Even joining Shang-A-Lang, I was this new guy who wrote some songs and they were totally cool with me incorporating songs. I think Low Culture—as a band—got to form together at the same time. At first it was Chris's songs, then it did get more like, "Oh, I have some songs," to more "Oh, I got something."

**Chris:** It's split pretty much down the middle—which is cool. Writing this new LP I was like, "Fuck, I've got to catch up with Joe. He's got more songs than me." [laughs]

**Daryl:** Community not competition.

**Joe:** I'm pretty particular. I'm kind of a diva about things.

**Kevin:** We should mention that everyone is nodding. [laughs]

**Joe:** I'm always trying to bring something that's maybe done; maybe it just needs a little more. I think we're getting to that point, because I can't handle jamming on anything. "Let's just play and see what happens." I check out and I just sit down. I start stewing.

**Chris:** I'm the same way. Shang-A-Lang used to do that. I would fucking put my guitar down. [laughs] It's the worst.

**Todd:** So not a lot of drum circles in your practices?

**Cade:** I think that's funny. I feel like me and Sam's other band—and just bands we've been in before—that's some of the times we've written our best stuff. Just jamming. [laughs]

# People are like, "I don't like hardcore because it has no hooks." I'm like, "Hardcore has hooks."

**Joe:** I hear that's how Hypatia does it. Jay tells me that's what you guys do. That sounds terrible.

**Sam:** It's kind of cool.

**Daryl:** Do you feel like you're going for a focused sound?

**Joe:** For me, definitely.

**Daryl:** How would you describe that sound?

**Joe:** I always want to make something a little bit complicated. [Daryl laughs] Not technical, really.

**Chris:** With ten chords that don't ever repeat.

**Daryl:** Is there a reason behind this?

**Joe:** I played in a band with Jeff Burke. [laughs]

**Chris:** I've always felt like I need to make something that's never been done.

**Daryl:** Something to challenge yourself.

**Chris:** Some weird chord progression, some turn that is unexpected. In this band, I've been going for a more straight-forward sound. So, that's interesting to hear, because I don't think we're on the same page, Joe. [laughs]

**Sam:** So, who's getting kicked out then? [laughs]

**Joe:** In Shang-A-Lang it was either Chris brought a song or Tommy brought—or even if I brought a song—it was like, "Here it is. It's done." And here, we're really picky about it.

**Chris:** Yeah, there's so much stuff that we bring to the table. We'll play it once and I'll be like, "Nope, that doesn't work. Never mind. This sounded really good on my acoustic guitar at home." [laughs]

**Daryl:** But how would you describe the sound that you guys are making? [laughs]

**Chris:** I don't know how to describe it and I think I have a really weird ear. I remember one of the new songs that I brought to the table—I'd written it and I was like, "Fuck yeah, this sounds like an Elvis Costello And The Attractions song." We played it and it still sounded like that to me. And then Joe is like, "Man, I really like that song. It sounds like Shotwell." [laughs] The furthest thing from what I was thinking.

**Daryl:** So it's a mix between Elvis Costello and Shotwell.

**Chris:** Somewhere between there.

**Kevin:** The sweet spot.

**Joe:** Not pop punk, absolutely *not* pop punk.

**Daryl:** I read, Chris, that you said that Low Culture isn't a punk band.

**Chris:** Did I say that at some point? [laughs]

**Joe:** You're ruining our cred.

**Chris:** That was...where did you read that?

**Daryl:** It was a fucking link you sent me.

**Chris:** I think we've gotten interviewed more in this band than I have in any other band. And sometimes I just get in a fucking mood when I'm answering questions. I'll read back the emails I sent to people and I'll be like, "Man, I sound like a dick." [laughs] So, no. I think we're a punk band. Maybe that day I didn't. [laughs] I probably went on a trip to Arizona or something and talked to Mikey, from Rumspringer, who refuses to call Rumspringer a punk band. They're a rock band. I was like, "Yeah, that's cool man. Let's just be rock bands." [laughs]

**Daryl:** Yeah, that's what you said in the interview.

**Cade:** Let the record stand. We're a punk band. [beer opens]

**Daryl:** Alright Joe, hypothetical situation.

**Joe:** Yes.

**Daryl:** Scion is on the phone. [laughs]

**Chris:** Dude! Wait, wait, wait, last night after I told you this story I was like, "I just told the guy who's interviewing us tomorrow this fucking story! Goddamnit!" Alright, sorry.

**Daryl:** You really wanna show up to a show in a Scion after you sold your song to Scion?

**Joe:** The thing is, they wanted to use *my* song. [laughs] It was very flattering. And at the time I was really going for positive thinking and creating my own future.

**Daryl:** This is during the phone call?

**Joe:** This is before the phone call, and then I got the phone call.

**Todd:** From Scion, the car company?

**Joe:** Hypothetically, yes. Actually, a dude from *Vice Magazine* was giving away a Scion.

**Todd:** Giving it away?

**Chris:** He wanted to use "Red Light Rumors" in a Scion commercial and was going to give Joe, and whoever else wanted a car, a car.



PAUL SILVER

**Daryl:** Side note, this is a prank phone call. [laughs]

**Chris:** I'm on the other end of the line in Long Island, New York spitting out my fucking beer. Rob from Iron Chic is like, "Hey, I'm really good at prank calls if you wanna prank call anybody." And I'm like, "Oh, let's prank call Joe." And I didn't realize he was gonna be so good at prank calling. At first I'm spitting out my beer laughing, and then I start feeling bad. [laughs] 'Cause he was really convincing.

**Joe:** I kinda felt it was a prank, but he was really good at it. The weird thing was, I get this phone call and it says it's from New York, and I don't think about it until I hang up and then I'm like, "Fucking Chris is in New York. If this is a Long Island number, I'm gonna be kinda bummed." It was just a really great prank call, because I've gotten calls from *Vice* to talk about the Marked Men which is the weirdest thing cause I'm

**Joe:** I thought I had amazing powers for a little bit.

**Kevin:** So how did the phone call end up?

**Joe:** I said, "Let me think about it and get back to you."

**Chris:** He texted me ten minutes later and was like, "You fucking dick." [laughs]

**Todd:** Name one major thing you've given up or have shelved to be a working musician—and especially in this band.

**Chris:** I haven't been on a real vacation in years and years and years.

**Joe:** I don't think I've ever really done it.

**Chris:** I think I did it once and it was weird. I was bored. "There's no show tonight?"

**Daryl:** "What the fuck are we going to do?!"

**Todd:** "Watch TV!"

**Chris:** Joe and I were talking about this the other day. I think we probably stayed in Las Cruces a lot longer than we would have otherwise.

**Cade:** That's true.

doing. Then people decide to move to Japan and you're just like, "I hate everything. What am I going to do now?" [laughs]

**Todd:** That person being... [laughs]

**Chris:** Are you talking about someone specific? [laughs]

**Joe:** Just people.

**Daryl:** So did you come to a conclusion about what you're doing? [Todd laughs]

**Joe:** In a way, yes. At that time it was a hard time for me. I guess, in terms of the Marked Men, we were kind of slowing down around 2006. Even though that was probably the year we did the most touring. We were touring the most because it seemed like there was a timeline. It was kind of like living moment to moment.

"Are we done? Are we done? Are we done?" And then it was, "We're done for however long." And I was not prepared. I had a bachelor's in sociology that I never planned on using. What was I going to do? I decided

**Joe:** I started getting up in my late twenties and getting really worried about what I was doing. Then people decide to move to Japan and you're just like, "I hate everything. What am I going to do now?"

like, "Sure I can ask them to do this thing." Hang up the phone and they're like, "I'm not doing that."

**Chris:** But when a car is involved...

**Joe:** But here's the thing, he was like, "You get a Scion." And I was like, "Wait, do I get a Scion, or does everyone get a Scion?" [laughs] 'Cause I wanna be fair. I would feel bad.

**Chris:** And Rob was like, "You can get a Scion and tell all those other dudes to fuck off, or we can give them all Scions. We'll give Ken from Dirtnap a Scion. You think I'm a fucking suit, but I'm really down with the punk rock."

**Joe:** And the funny thing is, this is how not punk I am in some ways. He was like, "It's like The Clash song." And I've never listened to The Clash, so I had no idea.

**Chris:** So would you have taken the Scion?

**Joe:** I don't know...

**Sam:** It's a yes.

**Chris:** I'm sorry, Joe.

**Todd:** Because you see the world a little bit instead of just being in Las Cruces the whole time.

**Chris:** Yeah. You know, I wouldn't even say it's giving stuff up. I mean, one of the cool things is, it's one of the only ways I could exist in Las Cruces. It's a fine town, it's cool. But, really, if I was there all the time I couldn't do it. It's always nice to go out, go do something, and then come back to your comfortable life. But, that's not necessarily giving something up.

**Joe:** I was talking to a friend not that long ago and she was like, "You've been to all these places, but it sounds like you've been there for a night." I said, "I don't know how to take trips." Not like I've done tons of touring, but I've toured since I was twenty-one and I'm thirty-three. I worked pizza jobs and Starbucks for a number of years because it was the way to get on tour. It worked out, but I started getting up in my late twenties and getting really worried about what I was

that was the perfect time for me to go to grad school and go back to El Paso. I already knew Chris, so it was an easy transition to go to Las Cruces. It all worked out. It probably was the best for me because I kept playing in bands. I was able to play with people, write songs, and get better at writing songs. And now I'm living the dream as a social worker. [laughs]

**Chris:** That's everybody's dream.

**Todd:** Sam, Cade?

**Cade:** I was going to say that I don't feel like I've sacrificed anything because...

**Joe:** Wait until you're thirty, dude. [laughs]

**Cade:** I got a while.

**Todd:** How old are you?

**Cade:** Twenty-six.

**Cade:** When I was a teenager, I had a lot of friends who were picking up guitars and instruments. I didn't start playing an instrument until I was eighteen, nineteen, twenty—around in there. It had always been a dream of mine to just tour and do that whole thing. I just never thought any of this

# Cade: Let the record stand. We're a punk band. [BEER OPENS]



RYAN MADDOX

stuff would ever happen. The fact that we've done a few little U.S. tours, we did the Iron Chic tour, northeast and Canada. Then we did the European tour. For me, that was all these dreams coming true. I never thought that would ever happen. It was some of the greatest things that have ever happened to me. I can't even say if I've sacrificed anything because the outcome has been so immensely satisfying.

**Todd:** That's awesome.

**Cade:** So, yeah...

**Joe:** I'm going to cry... [laughs]

**Sam:** I'm going to have to agree with Cade. I don't feel like I've sacrificed anything.

**Todd:** How old are you?

**Sam:** Twenty-eight. Even to say I could have gone and done all this stuff, I could have gone to all these other places, but they wouldn't have been from a local standpoint. I would have seen just the basic, general,

homogenized garbage that everyone else on vacation, or who travels, gets to see. But I've got to see the world from a local's perspective. I've got to hang out, sleeping on floors—which I think is fucking awesome.

**Cade:** It's the best.

**Joe:** You got to see so many clubs. [laughs] So many houses, all night long.

**Chris:** It's actually been kind of cool to be in a band with the two younger dudes who just spoke, I guess. [laughs]

**Cade:** Aww...

**Chris:** Because sometimes I find myself getting a little bit like, "Ugh, here we go again." But they're always stoked and that kind of grounds me. I should be enjoying myself; I should get my head out of my ass.

**Sam:** Come on Grandpa Mason, let's go!

**Todd:** So, Chris, lyrically is there anything you're either addressing now in Low Culture or that you hadn't done before in Shang-A-

Lang? Because the band's not called Shang-A-Lang anymore.

**Chris:** Right. I think when I started this band I absolutely had a different idea in mind. Originally, I wanted to write happy songs. [Todd laughs] I don't think that really happened, but that was originally my plan. I was in a good place when everything was happening and I wanted to be positive. I was telling Daryl this earlier, a lot of the Shang-A-Lang songs I was writing when I worked in a psychiatric institution with suicidal kids all day. I think a lot of the lyrics kind of reflect that. When I look back I'm like, "That wasn't really me." I didn't want to kill myself.

**Todd:** Or maybe you-at-work.

**Chris:** Screens, all the songs on there had an obvious theme.

**Todd:** Give me a couple of them.

**Chris:** How we're all incredibly disconnected from one another. Even at shows, you'll



PAUL SILVER

be waiting in line for the fucking bathroom and everyone's on their phone and no one is talking to each other. And just coming to the realization that honestly I'm just as bad as that, if not worse, than a lot of other people when it comes to that. I sometimes lose myself in this fucking other world. Why isn't what I'm doing right now okay? Why do I have to stare at my fucking telephone or check Facebook or see what other people are doing? And then, in some sense, these songs aren't as introspective. I kind of feel like I'm looking outward rather than inward. Just looking at what's going on around me. There's a lot more "you's" than "I's" in our songs, which is different for me. If that makes sense.

**Todd:** Yeah.

**Cade:** I totally had an idea about the concept of the album *Screens*. One thing that I loved about it—even though we were all writing these songs separately—it all kind of fell into that concept of screens.

**Chris:** It's fucked up and that's what I'm saying. When we take a break at practice, even still, we all sit down on couches and we're all staring at our fucking telephones. It's infuriating. It's weird.

**Cade:** I mean even screens beyond that. There was someone who reviewed the album... I don't if it was you...

**Todd:** It was probably me. [laughs]

**Joe:** Did it blow your mind? "I read this amazing review."

**Cade:** As all the songs were coming together I felt that that was such a great idea because it's not just the physical screen of a phone, but there are emotional screens, like these barriers.

**Joe:** Screen doors. [laughs]

**Cade:** Keeping out mosquitoes.

**Sam:** That's an important screen, actually.

**Cade:** It's the most important, I'd say.

**Joe:** Man, you're deep. Chris said he wanted to call it *Screens* and I was like, "I don't care..." [laughs]

**Todd:** Really?!

**Joe:** I don't know. I didn't think about it.

**Chris:** I think your actual answer was like, "Should we really call it the first song on the record?" [laughs]

**Cade:** I thought it was ballsy. I liked it.

**Joe:** It was edgy.

**Kevin:** I have a question related to that about the difference in sound from Shang-A-Lang to Low Culture because in Shang-A-Lang, for a connoisseur of Shang-A-Lang, the kind of rough, lo-fi production values are integral to the sound. And I remember when I first heard Low Culture I was like, "Oooh, who got all fancy pants on the studio production?"

**Todd:** Where are your fancy pants?

**Joe:** Well, Chris used to be punk... [laughs]

**Chris:** In Shang-A-Lang, it was very difficult to get to do anything, in a lot of ways. I always felt like I was apologizing when I was like, "I want to do this tour. Sorry." [laughs] They had

other shit going. It's totally cool. I'm not trying to talk shit about them. The prospect of going somewhere and recording something with them felt as if there were so many insurmountable barriers. It was just like, "I guess I'll spend two hundred dollars on a 4-track and some mics and see what happens." I still, to this day, have no fucking clue what I'm doing in terms of recording. It's just like put a mic here and sometimes it reproduces and sometimes it doesn't. With this band, everybody is like, "Yeah! Let's do it!" It's really easy to go to Fort Worth and record. I kind of feel like Shang-A-Lang would have been a more popular band if we would have actually recorded properly.

**Daryl:** That's definitely true.

**Chris:** For my ear, I grew up listening to Hickey and F.Y.P and the recordings weren't entirely good. So my ear is like, "Yeah! Fuck, raw recordings sound fucking great!" There were a lot of people who were always like, "This sounds like it was recorded in a garbage can and it's awful."

**Joe:** It was a shit-filled garbage can. [laughs] At that time, you weren't going to record with anyone in Cruces.

**Chris:** Yeah, that's the other thing.

**Joe:** Now, we have someone in El Paso we could go with. But that's recent.

**Chris:** Recording requires travel. I remember *The Answer Lies* recorded at some studio and the guy was like, "Yeah dude, I'm really getting pro sound down. I've been listening

# I can't even say if I've sacrificed anything because the outcome has been so immensely satisfying.

to a lot of Tool." I was like, "I don't want to be here." [laughs] I'll just do this myself. It's just been a different kind of approach. Plus Joe won't let me record anything. [laughs] He's alluded to that.

**Daryl:** Chris, I remember the first time you told me you were playing with Joe was in 2008 and you started a band called...

**Joe and Chris:** The Pretty Kitty Committee. [Todd laughs]

**Daryl:** And you had one goal...

**Joe:** What was the goal?

**Daryl:** To find a European label to release a 7" and then tour Europe.

**Chris:** Fuck, really?

**Joe:** Yeah, I don't remember.

**Chris:** That took a while. [laughs]

**Daryl:** You guys did it with Low Culture.

**Chris:** It only took like four tries. Four bands.

**Sam:** Better than five.

**Joe:** I think I do remember that, a little bit. Maybe if we could have gotten past show number one it would have been something.

**Chris:** The first show we ever played I got so...this is embarrassing. Marked Men are my favorite fucking band, pretty much. Gonna play in a band with Joe from Marked Men?! I was so nervous and I'm playing bass. I don't play bass, but I'm going to play bass. I was so nervous that I got so hammered. I was so terrible. I remember texting Joe the next day, because I thought Joe was never going to talk to me again. [laughs] I was like, "Dude, I'm so sorry, I fucked everything up." And I think your response was something like, "Dude, it's cool. I was in a street punk band." [big laughs]

**Daryl:** What? So what's the skinny on the street punk band?

**Joe:** Back in Denton, I was in this band called Whips And Furs. [laughs]

**Sam:** Can that be the name of the new album?

**Joe:** I lived in Denton. I was going to shows and stuff. I played bass. It was weird. No one knew I played bass really because I wasn't in any bands. Sometimes people would be like, "Oh, I hear you play bass. You want to jam or something?" They'd be like, "You're better than I thought you'd be." Eventually, they kept going through bass players and they asked me to fill-in on a show. They weren't mohawks at that time, but I start playing bass and then they're like, "We want you in the band." They were talking about tour and stuff. We went on our first tour and played three shows with Clit-45, who I'm actually still sort of friends with to this day. They still remember me. It was such

a different world for me. I remember the first show was in Oxnard.

**Daryl:** Wait, what year is this?

**Joe:** This is the beginning of 2002. The show wasn't in Oxnard. It ended up being in L.A. The dude who doesn't drive, doesn't do anything, we let him book the tour.

**Todd:** Ouch.

**Joe:** He booked it around getting him to his parents' house in California so he could go on a snowboarding trip. [laughs]

**Sam:** Genius.

**Daryl:** Perfect plan.

**Joe:** It's like my first tour and I'm like, "This is going to be cool." We're playing some bar in L.A. he tells us—I guess they start communicating through the phone—and he's like, "I guess it's past L.A. Ok, cool, it's a house. Awesome. It's a backyard party." We get there and we have big amps and there's kids playing these like 10" practice amps in this backyard and mohawks everywhere. And then we play with our huge amps and play like two notes until the power gets shut off. The cops come and start busting it. All the mohawk kids are all, "Fuck authority! Fuck you!" The cops are like, "We're taking anyone who's over twenty-one to jail." I'm hiding behind my amp just going, "This is the worst tour ever." We get out of it...

**Chris:** Was it also your first tour ever?

**Joe:** It was my first tour.

**Cade:** First tour, worst tour. [laughs]

**Joe:** We go back to Long Beach with the Clit-45 guys and the dude, I think the singer, he's in the van with us just talking. He tells us at some point, "Man, I've shit my pants twice tonight." [laughs] I'm like, "I can't relate to anybody!" I was probably wearing some stupid shirt that says like "Fort Worth Baseball Cats" or something. They're wearing studded everything. We stay with them. They put on a VHS tape of just mohawk bands and they're like, "Dude, check this out." I was just like, "What am I watching? I don't know what I'm watching."

**Todd:** Mohawk porn. [laughs]

**Joe:** That was just the first tour and we made it up to San Francisco, play a show, and then drove from San Francisco back to Denton.

**Daryl:** Woof. Geez.

**Joe:** In two days...

**Chris:** I'm surprised you're still doing this.

**Joe:** The next tours were way better.

**Chris:** With Whips And Furs? [laughs]

**Joe:** Ah, no. I quit the band not too long

afterwards and they were really upset with me. We practiced five to seven times a week.

**Todd:** Wow.

**Daryl:** Who does that? [laughs]

**Joe:** I had nothing else to do and I was committed. Everything was a production. Our guitarist was super anal and he would get pissed if someone said, "Ok you guys, you want to play the show?" "Well when do we play?" "You guys are going to play first." "No. No, we headline." It was really weird. I was super passive. Whatever he says.

**Daryl:** Are there any lyrics from this band that you still remember?

**Todd:** Something that resonated with you? Any snowboard jams?

**Joe:** I don't remember. They were political. [laughs] About the working class.

**Chris:** The working snowboard class.

**Cade:** "I'm tired of this oppression man. Drop me off at my parents' house to go snowboarding."

**Todd:** From the streets!

**Daryl:** Oi! Oi! Oi!

**Joe:** Yeah, pretty much... Greg, who wrote the lyrics, the drummer, I mean I'm still friends with the guy...

**Sam:** Wait the drummer wrote the lyrics?

**Joe:** Yeah, the singer didn't do shit. ...except sing with a British accent... [laughs] which was amazing!

**Sam:** Is it still amazing or was it amazing then?

**Joe:** Both. I'm friends with those dudes to this day and we don't talk about that time much. [laughs] It's a bummer, but when I quit the band I went to practice and went, "Guys, I'm going to quit." They're like, "Oh, Okay." And then in front of me they're like, "So guys, who do you think we should get to play bass now?" And I was like, "Okay, I'll just load up my amp to my car." I had a 3x15 cabinet, like a refrigerator on a dolly, and loaded it up by myself as they talked about what other bass player they could get right then.

**Todd:** Wow.

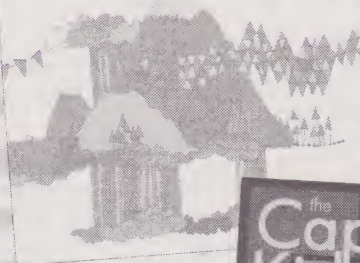
**Joe:** And then the band fell apart. We had this shirt for our tour that they designed that was pretty much a girl like getting raped.

**Daryl:** Ugh...

**Joe:** It was like, "Wow...Okay..." They were like, "Dude, yeah!" [laughs] I remember my friends coming to El Paso and saying that they really wanted to support you and buy a shirt, but that was messed up. It was some weird Japanese girl screaming with a hand over her mouth.

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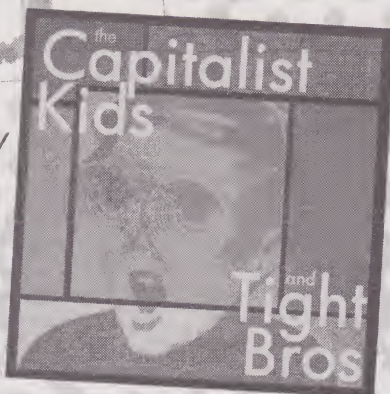


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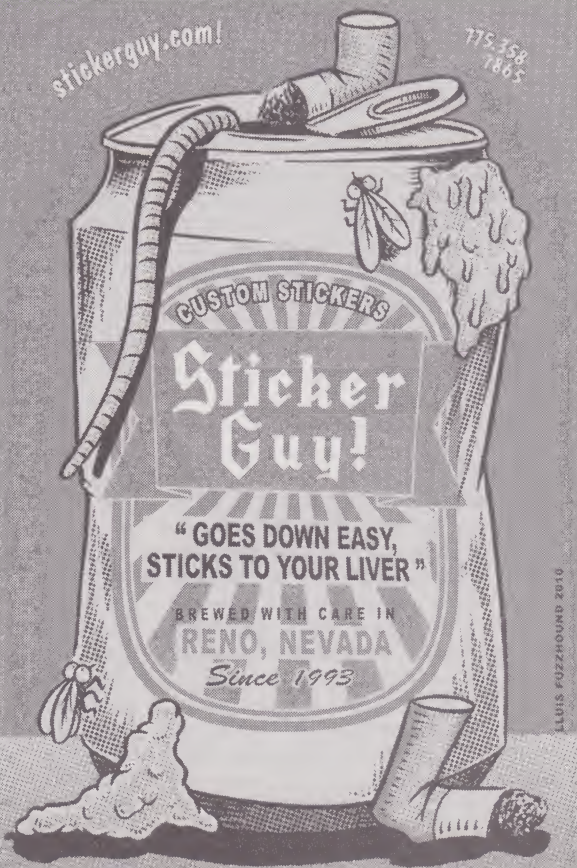
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**Joe:** All the mohawk kids are all,  
**“Fuck authority! Fuck you!”**  
 The cops are like, “We’re taking  
 anyone who’s over twenty-one to jail.”  
 I’m hiding behind my amp just going,  
**“This is the worst tour ever.”**

**Daryl:** Good lord.

**Sam:** Can I actually propose a follow-up question? With the Clit-45 dude shitting his pants twice, was that figurative or literally?

**Joe:** Literally. And we all got athletes’ foot from their shower. [laughs]

**Sam:** Second follow-up question, did he clean the shit out of his pants?

**Joe:** Don’t know... He stuck with it all night.

**Daryl:** Chris, I remember you saying when Joe left Shang-A-Lang that it was because essentially you guys didn’t care enough to play well. [laughs]

**Joe:** This is a multi-faceted question.

**Daryl:** I’m curious if you care now.

**Chris:** Do I care? I always care. [laughs] Here’s how Joe left things...

**Joe:** There’s two different stories!

**Chris:** This is the true story.

**Joe:** Come on, my story’s true as well. It just has a different kind of ending than yours.

**Chris:** Joe left Shang-A-Lang when we were playing a show in Las Cruces...

**Joe:** With Something Fierce.

**Chris:** And two songs in, maybe three songs...

**Joe:** That were awful!

**Chris:** He threw the mic down and said, “I’m fucking done,” and walked outside. Did we keep playing?

**Joe:** No.

**Chris:** At that point in time, I was like, “I get it, dude.” I should have done that, too. I was actually impressed with your...you really took control of that situation. [laughs]

**Joe:** Here’s the other part of that story. We were playing Way Out West Fest the next day. I didn’t want to do it, but I was like, “I’ll totally do it.” Then Chris texts me and says, “Dude, if you don’t want to do it, I’ll play bass.” And I was like, “Oh, all right.” Really, he just gave me an out to quit Shang-A-Lang and I was moving back to Denton at that point, finishing grad school. It was this weird part, too, where it seemed like, “Why are we playing?” We practiced and played a show and couldn’t get through a song or be way too hammered. The four people would not care.



**Chris:** I definitely care. If we play a not very good show, I’m really bummed out. I’ve always cared.

**Joe:** Yeah, you did.

**Chris:** At that point in time, we were just hanging on. We shouldn’t have been a band anymore.

**Todd:** Not many bands have been able to—especially punk bands—get out of that area and exist over a long period of time or tour. How do you personally put checks and balances for Low Culture not being a mañana band?

**Chris:** That’s always been my struggle with Las Cruces. In a lot of ways everyone is so, “Oh, we’ll do it later.” I think that over the years it’s taken me pushing people. I come from this family where everything was fucking stacked. Your day was filled with appointments and all this shit. I can’t just be stagnant. I watch TV one night and don’t do anything, don’t pack records, don’t whatever and I feel

like I’m wasting away. I’ve always kind of pushed people, I guess.

**Sam:** I think the majority of us, we’ve all played in other bands where that’s kind of been the situation. It just kind of sucks, so it’s just so happens that we were lucky enough to all get together. It’s really rare that if someone wants to practice, that we don’t.

**Cade:** I feel like the four of us have a little bit of that ambition. We’re at an advantage compared to the rest of the town.

**Chris:** Yeah, fuck all our friends! [laughs]

**Sam:** Everyone, they’re garbage!

**Cade:** ...We’re great. [laughs]

**Todd:** End with that.

# JABBER

Introduction by Kevin Dunn  
Interview by Kevin Dunn and Todd Taylor  
Photos by Kelly Lone and Paul Silver  
Layout by Matt Terribly Average

Danny—bass, vocals  
Kristia—guitar, vocals  
Cody—guitar, vocals  
Marco—drums, cowbell





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# It's just the easiest way to get a large crowd to pay attention to me, if I'm the loudest thing in the room.

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Jabber is a pop punk band—and unabashedly so. They make no apologies for pouring syrup and sugar all over a two-minute punk song. Why should they? With saccharine-sweet harmonies fused to catchy hooks and underpinned by some punk rock rawkness, they have already amassed a substantial following during their rather short existence.

Emerging from the ashes of The Pillowfights! and Dead Ringer, Jabber is admittedly not breaking much new ground. But neither did Boris The Sprinkler, and who doesn't love Boris? Fuck you, Dale. Like Boris, the Riverdales, and countless other great bands, Jabber wears their Ramones' influences on their sleeves. And on their pants, hats, and shoes. Their song "I Wanna Be Your Girlfriend" is the perfect response to Joey's "I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend." No need to re-invent the wheel when you can have so much fun fine-tuning it. And Jabber is all about having fun. And being clever, as proven by such great lines as, "Maybe next year I'll do something better / Feed the hungry and knit the homeless sweaters."

Their one release so far, the *Too Many Babes* EP, is a pop punk party of epic proportions. And one gets the strong feeling that the party is only just getting started. We sat down with Jabber at Luigi's for a slice of pizza and a chat before their set at Awesome Fest. Kristia couldn't join us, so we talked to Danny, Cody, and Marco.

**Kevin:** Danny knows this, but you guys don't. I have two daughters, Barrow and Strummer, six and nine. They were obsessed with The Pillowfights and now they are with Jabber. They are totally into you guys. A year or so ago, Danny sent them drawings with guitars and keyboards, with phrases like "Barrow, you are awesome." "Strummer, you are strong." Each one has it framed by their beds. And in their rooms they have white blinds on the windows and the only thing on the white blinds are Jabber stickers. [laughter]

**Cody:** Beautiful.

**Mario:** That's so fucking awesome.

**Danny:** That's so cool.

**Kevin:** It is very cool. All they knew about my coming out this weekend was that I'm going to see Danny and Jabber. They actually gave me some questions to ask. [laughter] I'm going to start with their questions, because their questions are way better than any of my questions. [laughter]

**Cody:** Is one of them "Who are the other people in the band?" [laughter]

**Kevin:** The first question was from my eldest: Why do you play music in front of people?

**Cody:** Because if you turn your back to them, it's kind of rude, right?

**Danny:** I think that I like playing music in front of people because I like being the center of attention. It's just the easiest way to get a large crowd to pay attention to me, if I'm the loudest thing in the room. [laughs]

**Cody:** I do it because it's pretty fun. It's a rush. I mean, I did some sports. I was a bowler in high school and that was pretty intense, but playing in front of a crowd, now that gets my kicks going. It gives me a jolt.

**Kevin:** A bowler? Wow.

**Cody:** Pretty exciting stuff, I know.

**Kevin:** The attention must have been incredible.

**Todd:** What was your average?

**Cody:** It was about a 160 average, but my highest game was a 234.

**Todd:** Nice.

**Cody:** When I was in high school—you might have to censor this out—my English teacher was on a league with me and he would buy me beers. It was pretty cool.

**Danny:** Just don't say what grade you were in.

**Kevin:** Third. [laughter]

**Mario:** Still in grade school.

**Kevin:** Another question from my girls is: Why did you name yourself Jabber?

**Cody:** I want to know this, too.

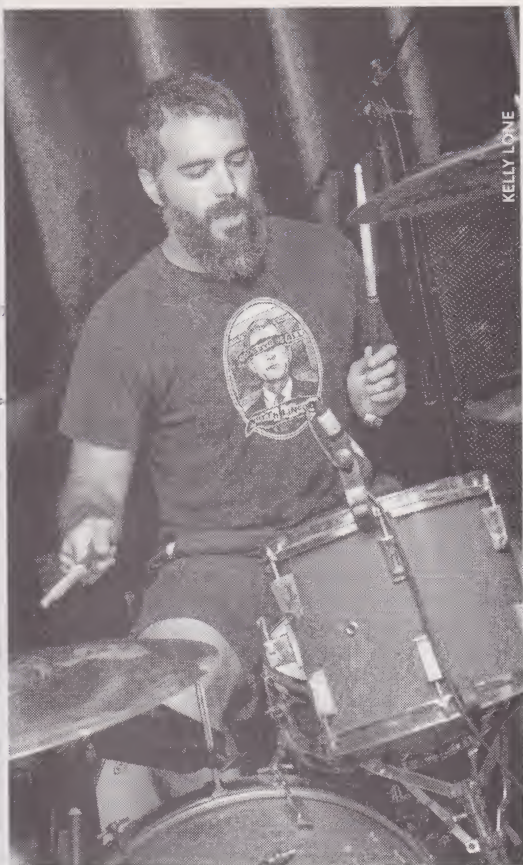
**Danny:** I really wanted a name that had only two syllables and sounded like a '90s band.

**Todd:** What '90s band are two syllables and sound like that?

**Danny:** Breeders is a good one or Belly. They all have really good names. One of my friends—we always talked about what band names were the best-sounding band names—and we always said two-syllable names.

Some of them sound really '90s and I like that. I was kind of convinced I couldn't find one. But then, I just kept searching weird names. We didn't know what to call ourselves. Then I just said, "I like the consonants J and B."

I was searching through Scrabble words or something for two-syllable words that started in J or started in B. I found Jabber.



These are cool. These are hard words. J and B are not in a lot of words. It's not a very amusing story. Then, immediately after, we got a lot of GG And The Jabbers references. I was like, okay...

**Cody:** Yes. GG Allin.

**Kevin:** I can see that.

**Danny:** I know. I haven't started defecating on stage yet, but...

**Mario:** It's still early.

**Todd:** Wait till you're eighty.

**Kevin:** My youngest wants to know... this is a serious question. Pancakes or waffles?

**Danny:** Pancakes.

**Cody:** Pancakes.

**Mario:** It depends on the day.

**Kevin:** Why the preference?

**Cody:** Because you can put chocolate chips in them.

**Danny:** I put Fruity Pebbles in my pancakes sometimes. It's really good. I like pancakes because they're like a soft bread. One of my things, recently, is that I'll make peanut butter and jelly pancakes. It's like having a sandwich, but it's just soft pancake bread.

**Kevin:** Which is why you're in a pop punk band. [laughter]

**Danny:** Also, waffle irons are kind of hard to clean.

**Cody:** And "cake" is in the name. I like that.

**Danny:** I like cake. Pancakes are a lot easier for me. I can make them a lot faster.

**Kevin:** What is the background of how you guys got together? One from The Pillowfights! and two from Dead Ringer. Mario, I'm not totally certain about the background for you.

**Mario:** A handful of different bands touring, I guess. [laughs]

**Danny:** Yes, he's been in a lot of bands. I know Mario from when he did a tour in 2009

and he was playing with Off With Their Heads on tour with Dear Landlord and that's where I met Mario. We'd been friends. He lived in Michigan. He moved out here and needed a place to store his drums. We had a practice spot. A couple of months later Lindsey, our original drummer, left the band. She decided she didn't want to be in it anymore. Mario already had his drums at our practice space. I was like, "You want to fill in for some shows, buddy?"

**Cody:** He didn't but we worked on him.

**Mario:** "Do you want to be in our band?" "No, no."

**Danny:** I didn't think he'd want to be in the band, because he's not really into pop punk.

**Mario:** "Come on, be our drummer." "No." [laughter] "At least fill in for a couple of shows." "Okay, okay, okay."

**Todd:** They weren't ready to kick you out of the practice space if you didn't join?

**Mario:** No. When I moved here I wasn't even going to bring my drums, but I just brought them anyway and I ended up using them.

**Danny:** I knew Kristia. I knew her because there was this thread on the pop punk message board about this girl doing all these YouTube covers of pop punk bands. She does Jawbreaker, The Ergs, and Dear Landlord. Everybody was just critiquing her videos in this public forum and watching them. Eventually, she started Dead Ringer in New Jersey and then decided she wanted to move out here. Then she got Cody and this guy Evan to play in Dead Ringer, instead of who she had before. She just relocated the band to San Francisco.

**Mario:** The East Coast version of Dead Ringer played with my other band, Protected Left. On their last East Coast tour we played two or three days with them. That's how I met Kristia the first time. When I came out here to visit, before moving, I was texting her, "I'm going to be here for a while. Know some good spots to see?" I texted Danny a few times independently, not really knowing that maybe you guys had met. When I ended moving out eight, nine months later they had started their band already.

**Cody:** It's kind of like an episode of *Lost* where everybody meets each other but they just bump elbows. "Excuse me." You find out later that they played an epic role. You know what I mean? [laughter] Nobody knows what I mean. You can cut that out...

**Danny:** Me and Kristia, when she moved to San Francisco, I worked at a punk club in East Bay called 924 Gilman, and she was asking if somebody would book her band Dead Ringer. I was like, "I like your band Dead Ringer because I know who you are. You are that pop punk girl from YouTube." I had them play at my birthday show, which was very sparsely attended. I'm not very popular, even though I'm really popular. [laughter] That's when I finally met her in person. No, I met her right before that at a Mixtapes show. We just started talking about starting a band.

**Kevin:** How's Jabber different from the Pillowfights or Dead Ringer?



**Danny:** I know that the Pillowfights were really different. I feel like the sound was really different. Leo and I had a different idea of what pop punk was than Mark and Trevor. We had these various amalgamations of weird sounds that we were trying to accomplish. I feel like it worked out, but I feel Jabber is more what I want to be doing. It's more of the music I want to listen to. It's exciting that people seem to like it. [laughs] That makes me feel good. People are interested, that's great. I like attention. [laughter]

**Kevin:** Last time we met up in Oakland and I asked you this question—I'm curious of what you'll say now. The question basically is why do you play 1-4-5 basic pop punk in 2013?

**Danny:** I'm not very good at bass guitar or writing songs. I feel like I've only been playing bass for the past year. I've had my bass since I was a teenager. It just sat in the closet most of the time. That's what I feel comfortable writing. One time Kris wrote a song that had six chords in it and I got mad at her. I said, "That's too many."

**Mario:** I think there's a marked difference between the songs you write and the songs Kris writes. In the sense that that yours are more...

**Danny:** Repetitive, easy....

**Mario:** More like the Queers or Ramones-style stuff, like even Screeching Weasel, and hers are a little more than that. It's not like it strays that far in that field. At times, she's bringing in Captain Beefheart jams or anything like that.

**Danny:** Kris used to be in a metal band.

**Kevin:** That will ruin you.

**Todd:** A lot of time changes in metal.

**Danny:** She's awesome though. She's really good. [laughs]

**Kevin:** What are the songwriting duties like? Do you guys work separately? Do you collaborate?

**Danny:** Usually, when Kris writes a song she brings the whole song. She writes everything. I'll usually write my own harmonies, or we'll write our own harmonies. When I write a song, I just write it bare bones. This is the verse and this is the chorus. Then I come to everybody, and we structure it and work it out.

**Cody:** Try to put in a little...

**Danny:** Put in all the love and the harmonies.

**Cody:** I like throwing in pauses.

**Danny:** Yes. I usually just tell Kris, "I want this one to sound like Josie and The Pussycats." Then, "Okay, we've gotta use some palm muting." She throws in some solos. Then Cody throws in a solo. They make it sound good. I don't feel like I can hold my own at all, by myself. I can barely play a song [laughs]. They hold it all together, which is awesome. Everybody makes it come together and sound better. I try to keep things pretty simple and straightforward. I think it's great. It works.

**Kevin:** You're also a major fixture in the Bay Area punk scene: working at 1-2-3-4 Go! Records, Gilman Street, and with Avi at Silver Sprocket Records. Is that a hindrance sometimes?

**Cody:** It's for sporting goods. It's a place where dreams go to die. And on the weekends I'm a gymnastic instructor. I've been doing gymnastics for thirteen years. I do birthday parties, too.

**Todd:** What do you do at birthday parties? Gymnastics? Tumbling?

**Cody:** Yes. It's usually aimed for a younger crowd. There are not too many older kids coming in. We get them all jazzed up. I shake them a little bit. [laughter] They get to have fun. They get to go in the pit, on trampolines, and all that jazz. There is a zip line. They get their cake and ice cream, and then they want to go back and do it again. I'm like, "No kid, get out of here."

**Kevin:** I'm hiring you for my next birthday party.

**Danny:** I want to zip line into a cake.

[laughs]

**Todd:** That was the audition for Jabber.

**Danny:** Yes. [laughter]

**Kevin:** Well, you had me at bowling. [laughter]

**Danny:** When we started Kris was just like, "Oh, Cody has got to be in our band." And I'm like, "Okay." [laughs]

**Cody:** I was kind of reluctant.

**Danny:** I had met Cody several times before, but I feel like I had a hard time remembering

That's what I do for this right here. Take one for the team. I do it.

**Mario:** It doesn't really seem like giving up much. Danny and I are thirty. Cody just turned twenty-six. I feel like I've been playing in bands for as long as I can remember. Weekends, our bands would be trying to tour as much as possible. So at some point you establish a new baseline. Everybody has their own as far as what their life is like or where they're hoping their life will go. Once you've been doing it for a while, it doesn't seem like you're losing out on anything or certainly giving anything up. I suppose if you looked at it from someone else's perspective, you could be like, "Oh, well that would be really nice to have, or it would be really great if I could do this, or X, Y or Z." But being in the position it doesn't really seem that way.

**Danny:** I guess I don't feel like I've given up much. I had a steady job for a long time where I just worked full-time and got benefits.

**Kevin:** What was the job?

**Danny:** I worked in a record store in San Jose called Streetlight Records. I loved it. It was like my family. I was there for so long. I was there for a decade. I gave up that job because I wanted to move, and I wanted to go to Oakland. When I moved to Oakland I started a band. I don't really feel like my life

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## One time Kris wrote a song that had six chords in it and I got mad at her. I said, "That's too many."

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**Danny:** Ummm...

**Kevin:** I'm thinking specifically about your living situation. Didn't your landlord just double your rent?

**Danny:** [laughs] My landlord just doubled my rent because I bring too many bands home. We have to move by November because he wants us out. He's asked us not to have bands over. All of my friends are in bands. It's hard not to bring bands home. But I work a bunch of cool, fun jobs and don't make enough money. [laughs] It's a little stressful at times. Overall, I really enjoy everything I do.

**Kevin:** What do you do for employment?

**Mario:** I've just been doing weird things since I've been out here. Stuff like internships or inventory at different places. Nothing consistent.

**Cody:** What was the question?

**Danny:** Cody watches hamburger videos. [laughs]

**Mario:** Bovine University. [laughter]

**Cody:** Yeah, I go to Bovine University. I recently just got my third job working at Five Guys. Not to be confused with my other job working at Big Five on the weekends.

**Kevin:** What is Big Five?

his name. I'm not the only one. Everybody calls him Cory. [laughs]

**Cody:** I get Tony or Cory a lot. [laughter]

**Danny:** Nobody remembers his name.

**Cory:** I've even gotten as far as Jory or Jody.

**Danny:** [laughs] I don't know why. We just try to hide him in the shadows. You can play back there in the dark spot.

**Cody:** I like the dark spot. [laughter]

**Kevin:** I'm going to steal one of Todd Taylor's questions and that is, what do you give up? Is there something that you're giving up to live this DIY pop punk lifestyle?

**Cody:** I gave up going to the beach the other day because I had to be on the computer watching these training videos for my new job, and that was bummer, man. I did not want to do that. I work three crappy jobs, because I can leave whenever I want, essentially, and if they get mad at me it's like, "Well, I only work here...eh."

I'll leave if it's going to be that big of a deal. I can't really get too committed to any one thing. I haven't had health insurance in like forever. I haven't seen a doctor in... I don't know. I'm pretty sure I'm losing calcium in my bones. But that's what I do.

has changed at all. I have a little less peace of mind now, and I get stressed out a lot more. I'm working a lot of jobs to make ends meet, and not quite making ends meet.

**Cody:** Yeah, I know that game.

**Danny:** I'll figure it out. This is the first band where I felt like I need to pay for rent on a practice space. It's like in my adult band, and it has rent that is involved with it. Oh shit, I haven't paid rent yet, shit. [laughter] Oh, she's going to be mad. Chelsey, I'm sorry if you're reading this. [laughs]

**Kevin:** What's in the future for recording? You've got the EP out.

**Danny:** We've got the EP out. At the end of April we recorded four new songs. Two of them are coming out on a split with Mixtapes for Asian Man Records. Then two of the songs are coming out on Bloating Kat Records for a split with the Science Police from New York. We're slowly writing more songs, working up towards a full length. So, that's going to be hard. [laughs]

**Mario:** That's half in the bag already.

**Danny:** Yeah. There are tentative plans for a full length next summer, which I'm excited about.

**Kevin:** What's your worst show experience so far?

**Cody:** Submission with Eli.

**Danny:** Oh yeah. We played at a show—it was before Mario. Lindsey was in San Diego, visiting her family, and we couldn't get her to come home. We had to get a fill-in drummer.

**Cody:** Eli stepped up to the plate, which is cool.

**Cody:** He didn't really have ample time to learn the songs.

**Danny:** Yeah, we only got to practice with

**Cody:** For me, personally, the last show we played in... was that the last show we played?

**Danny:** Tuesday?

**Cody:** Tuesday, yeah. Kris and I left before we played and we were getting calls and he texts me, "Hey, let's go." We literally just walked right up on stage and started playing. Someone dropped-D my E string or bumped into my guitar. I don't know. But the way we're doing our set now it's a few songs back to back to back. There

**Todd:** You guys ever talk in musical code to one another?

**Danny:** Musical code?

**Todd:** Yeah. There's always so much shorthand in pop. You're just like, "More Queers less Ramones."

**Danny:** I feel like we use words. [laughter] Sometimes we just make weird barking noises at each other. I don't know. The closest thing I could think of was when I told Kris, "I want this song to sound like Josie And



KELLY LONE

him twice. It was only like our third show or something.

**Cody:** That was at Submission. Sound quality was garbage.

**Danny:** Yeah, the sound guy was horrible.

**Cody:** I pretty sure a couple times either I'm not playing the right song or he's not playing the right song, or something's not right.

**Danny:** Also we played at this place in San Jose, called the Rock Shop. The sound guy threw my microphone against the wall so hard, because he couldn't get it to work. We later found out it was because the volume wasn't up on his soundboard. But he threw my microphone. My microphone that I paid for against the wall very hard and it has drywall stuck in it still.

really wasn't time for me to stop and tune. At one point I was like, "I'm going to stop everything right now. This is terrible. I can't go on." But I saved it because I told a sweet knock-knock joke.

**Danny:** Cody is really good with the last minute jokes and keeping people happy. He's also really good at saying the most awkward things possible.

**Cody:** I do. I like it when it gets weird and creepy.

**Danny:** Yeah. He makes the whole crowd uncomfortable and that's why we keep him around.

**Mario:** It's like when people say Sting was in *Dune*. Well he appeared in *Dune*. I won't say he acted necessarily. He was in it.

The Pussycats." That's like the closest thing I could think of. "I want this to sound real Josie." But yeah, maybe I'll start doing that.

**Todd:** Where do you think the largest inner tension is musically with the band? I'm not talking personalities or anything but musically, the tension that gives it shape and binds it together.

**Mario:** Any of the timing that's not in the middle ground, so anything that's like double time, or half time, it's usually me trying to push it into there. It's because I like both of those a great deal, especially the faster stuff. I don't think it's a stretch to say that as soon as I joined the band everything bumped up speed wise at least fifty to one hundred beats per minute faster.

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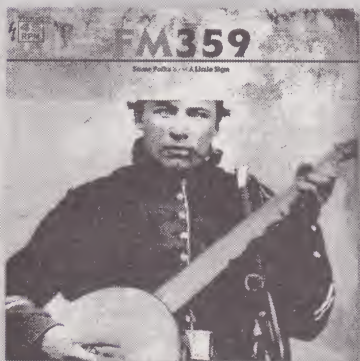
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**Danny:** Yeah. We got a lot faster. I would say Mario is probably the inner tension in our band. [laughter] He gets under my skin. [laughs] We were playing a show on Monday, and Mario got a cowbell and didn't tell anyone, and he started playing it in the middle of a song.

**Cody:** He told me, but he swore me to secrecy. We were drinking.

**Mario:** I wasn't going to tell anybody but his birthday was the day before. We just went out to breakfast then it ended up being like the whole day going to a new place and place and place. I got this cow bell. It's great.

**Danny:** In the middle of "Girlfriend," the part that's just bass and snare, there was suddenly cowbell. Me and Kristia just lost our minds. We're like, "What's going on?"

**Mario:** It's perfect. It's not like I'm playing it everywhere. I saw it. I was buying some other garbage drum crap or whatever. It was like dirt cheap in the used section. There's no way I can let that go. It's coming home with me. Because even if it didn't work I would be like, "It was like barely money." I knew the part in the song. I just go down to snare drum for a couple rotations of the riff or whatever. I have to put cowbell in there. It would be awesome.

**Kevin:** I just want to own the fact that tonight when you guys play, I'll be the asshole yelling, "More cowbell." That will be me. [laughter]

**Mario:** Realistically, it only happens once but we can make that change. Tip of the iceberg, right?

**Kevin:** Man, it's a slippery slope with a cow bell.

**Danny:** I don't know. Inner tension still. Probably feelings. We're pop punk, so we have a lot of feelings. [laughter] I think that's what all of our songs are about. [laughs]

**Todd:** It would be inner-inner tension?

**Danny:** Inner-inner tension.

**Todd:** Tension within your own self.

**Danny:** Yeah, it's like the inner-tube of inner tension.

**Todd:** What do you think are the largest things that you fight about yourself with this band?

**Danny:** I feel like financially affording everything I want to do with the band is hard. None of us can make it work yet. We really want to tour, but it's really hard.

**Cody:** I fight with myself that I should be a better guitar player but I'm not.

**Danny:** I should be a better bass player. I should practice, too, but I don't.

**Todd:** But again, that's a slippery slope. You don't want to get proficient.

**Danny:** Yeah. I don't want to be good.

**Mario:** You just want to be able to play whatever you can hear in your head.

**Danny:** I wish I could play acoustic guitar or something...

**Kevin:** Careful, or you're going to find yourself in front of a campfire. [laughter]

**Cody:** Singing "Kumbaya."

**Danny:** My hair's going to start smelling weird. It's all downhill from there.

**Todd:** I always think about when Otis Redding saw Bob Dylan. Someone asked

him what he thought after listening to Bob Dylan. He just looks to the guy and he goes, "Too many fucking words." And walks away. That's where I stand on that. [laughter]

**Cody:** We should write a nine-minute-long song now.

**Danny:** Okay, I'm into it. Nine-minute-long?

**Cody:** Yeah, a Dylan tribute song.

**Danny:** It's going to repeat the same part eight hundred times. I don't know how to do that. I can write two parts tops. Maybe a bridge.

**Todd:** Pauses.

**Danny:** Oh, yeah, we like pauses. There will be a cowbell solo.

**Cody:** See, it's already halfway done. I got it.

**Danny:** You got it. At least two minutes. We can do this. It just needs seven more minutes.

**Kevin:** Can you ever have too many babes?

**Danny:** No, never. Theoretically, you can.

**Mario:** No.

**Danny:** Theoretically. Maybe if it was like a clown car situation.

**Mario:** You just make two trips. [laughter]

**Danny:** Yeah, I guess that would work. I don't think we can have too many babes.



KELLY LONE

**Mario:** However many trips are required.

**Danny:** The name of the EP was a joke on Too Many Daves. But I guess that was pretty obvious. [laughter]

**Cody:** I have a question for you guys now. Six fingers on each hand or a third nipple?

**Todd:** Six fingers on each hand.

**Cody:** That's what you're going with?

**Todd:** Yeah.

**Cody:** You're sticking to it?

**Todd:** Yeah.

**Danny:** But you couldn't wear mittens.

**Todd:** So? [laughter]

**Mario:** "Dude, I'm in San Diego. What the fuck do I need mittens for!" [laughter]

**Kevin:** Wait, do I get to choose where the third nipple goes?

**Cody:** Danny gets to pick.

**Danny:** I get to pick.

**Kevin:** Oh hell no, I'll take the six fingers.

**Danny:** I always pick something horrible thing like forehead or nose.

**Mario:** "Is that a big zit?" "No, it's a nipple!" [laughter]



# TOP FIVES

## RAZORCAKE



### Adam Bowers

#### Top 5 Bands with Women Singers

- Hop Along
- PS Eliot
- Lemuria
- Slingshot Dakota
- Pohgoh

### Adam Mullett

1. Matt Berry, *Witchazel*
2. Pleasure Cross, *Demo*
3. The Exploited, *Horror Epics* (RIP Todd Murphy)
4. The Replacements, *Tim*
5. Arsenal being top of the Premier League

### Art Ettinger

- The Ills, *Tuning Out* Cassette
- Benny The Jet Rodriguez, *Home.Run.* LP
- Stamford Bridge, *Solstice Demo 7"*
- Can Of Beans, Self-titled LP
- Bad Religion, *Christmas Songs LP*

### Billy Kostka

- The Spits, *IV*
- White Fence, *Live in San Francisco*
- Pampers, Self-titled
- Bad Times, Self-titled
- Iron Chic, *The Constant One*

### Caitlin Hoffman

- The 5 Best Albums I Discovered through a Promo Agency*
1. Ron Little John And The Funk Embassy, *Shining On*
  2. Stoney, *More Than Animals*
  3. Louise Aubrie, *Time Honoured Alibi*
  4. The Black Clouds, *Better Days*
  5. Vulture Kult, *Don't Let Rock n' Roll Ruin Your Life*

### Camille Reynolds

- Top 5 All XX Bands, New and Old, That I've Got Much Love for:*
1. Le Tigre (First love)
  2. Hysterics (Still patiently waiting for their new release!)

3. Quaaludes (Never heard of them? Better seek that shit out!)
4. Kleenex/LiLiPUT (First Swedish punk love)
5. Midnite Snaxxx (Rock'n'roll goodness)

### Candice Tobin

1. *Something to Dü: A Tribute to Hüsker Dü 7"*
2. Red Dons, *Notes on the Underground 7"*
3. Calvinball / Rumspringer, *Split 7"*
4. Homeowners, *Light and Vision 7"*
5. Rations, *Martyrs and Prisoners 7"*

### Cassie Sneider

- Top 5 Songs for Burying a Drifter in Your Backyard*
- "Drift Away" by Dobie Gray
  - "Ramblin' Man" by the Allman Brothers
  - "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" by The Temptations
  - "Sweet Freedom" by Michael McDonald
  - "Hard Luck Woman" by KISS

### Chris Mason

1. Love Triangle, *Clever Clever LP*
2. Radioactivity, Self-titled LP
3. Iron Chic, *The Constant One LP*
4. Tenement / Screaming Females, *Split 7"*
5. Red Dons, *Notes on the Underground 7"*

### Chad Williams

1. NO///SÉ, *Beach Bathroom Bingo 7"*
2. Holier Than Thou?, *You Can't Have Slaughter without Laughter LP*
3. 45 Adapters, *Dress Well, Drink Heavily 7"*
4. Autistic Youth, *Nonage LP*
5. Radioactivity, Self-titled LP

### Chris Terry

- Big Bill / Basketball Shorts, *Split Cassette*
- Eureka California / Good Grief, *Split 7"*
- The Babies, *Our House on the Hill LP*
- The Range, *Nonfiction LP*
- Pusha T, *My Name Is My Name LP*

### Craven Rock

1. The Coup, *Sorry to Bother You*
2. El-P, *Cancer 4 Cure*
3. RVIVR, *The Beauty Between LP*
4. *Pop Magic!* by Grant Morrison (essay)
5. *Gnar!!* by Rudy Rucker (book)

### Daryl Gussin

- Prince, "Young Americans" Shortest hit chorus of the year!
- All the new Dirtnap releases! Radioactivity, Mind Spiders, Missing Monuments, and Bad Sports!
- French Exit, *Guts & Black Stuff*, tie with The Visitors, *Yeti*
- Red Dons, *Notes on the Underground 7"*
- The Libyans, *Expired Language LP*, tie with RVIVR and Crusades LPs

### Designated Dale

1. Nightmare Boyzzz, *Bad Patterns LP* (Fuck yes)
2. Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, *Unvarnished LP* (Joanie continues to deliver)
3. The Osmonds, *Crazy Horses LP* (Holy shit, still can't believe I never heard this record!)
4. The Ugly Ducklings, *Nothin' 7"* (Bitchin' Toronto proto punk, via 1966)
5. Pat Todd & The Rankoutsiders and The Woggles on 11/09/13 at The Redwood, DTLA

### Donna Ramone

- The General Consensus for Best Albums of 2013, in No Particular Order*
- Crusades, *Perhaps You Deliver this Satansatansatanhellfire*
  - Radioactivity, Self-titled (Sick tunes)
  - Mind Spiders, *Inhumanistic* (We are DEVO)
  - Low Culture, *Screens* (That's the third Marked Men-related band on this list, if you're counting)
  - RVIVR, *The Beauty Between* the three years everyone waited for this.
  - Honorable Mention to my friends' bands that put out stuff, I guess.

### Evan Wolff

1. Radioactivity, Self-titled LP
2. Extra Feeler, *Queen for a Day Cassette*
3. Acid Fast, *Rabid Moon Cassette*

4. The Elsinores, *Dreams of Youth*
5. Swearin', *Surfing Strange*

### Gabe Rock

#### Top 5 Mixtape #4

1. Dead Moon, "It's OK"
2. The Five Discs, "Doctor"
3. Cormega, "Fallen Soldiers"
4. Joe Strummer, "Coma Girl"
5. The Small Faces, "Itchycoo Park"

### George Rager

- Top 5 Things I Currently Listen to on My Iphone Whilst Driving Back-And-Forth from Torrance to West LA Since I Deleted Everything and Started Over Because It Was Jammed Up with Crap (In No Particular Order)*
- Pleasure Leftists, Self-titled
  - Mind Spiders, *Inhumanistic*
  - Radioactivity, Self-titled
  - Direct Control, bootleg discography
  - Bob Wills & His Texas Playboys, *For the Last Time*

### Indiana Laub

- Adventures, *Clear My Head with You 7"*
- Boys' Club, Self-titled EP
- Prince, Self-titled 7"
- High Dive, *These Are Days EP*
- Martha, "Sycamore" b/w "Lost Without You" 7"

### Joe Dana

1. French Exit opening for some Florida band called Against Me! at The Troubadour.
2. The Fucking Wrath, Summer Vacation, Horror Squad, Boboso, and French Exit at their record release show at VLHS
3. RVIVR at VLHS
4. RVIVR at the Talking Stick
5. Halloween Show at the Redwood: Hands Like Bricks as Bouncing Souls 182, Lysol Gang as Green Day, Members of French Exit, Adder, Payoff and Harry And The Hendersons as Limp Bizkit (It was rad. I swear.), Des and the Cendents as guess who and my silly band got to play the Cramps.

### Joe Evans III

- Cleveland Bound Death Sentence, Self-titled LP re-issue
- Future Virgins, *Late Republic LP*
- Gateway District, *Old Wild Hearts LP*

Trying to understand lyrics to Dillinger Four songs.

- Treasure Fleet, *Future Ways* LP
- Travis Fristoe and Aaron Cometbus, *Radon* (Book)

#### Jon Mule

1. Dick Dale, *King of the Surf Guitar*
2. Watching *Conan the Destroyer* with family on Thanksgiving
3. *FILMAGE!!!!*
4. Night Birds and Neighborhood Brats touring in 2014?
5. Mike Watt & the Secondmen at Permanent Records

#### Juan Espinosa

- Radioactivity, Self-titled LP
- Belgrado, *Siglo XX* LP
- Slight Slappers and Capitalist Casualties live in Baldwin Park, CA
- The Repos, *Lost Still Losing* Cassette
- No Statik, *Unity and Fragmentation* LP, tie with Libyans, *Expired Language* LP

#### Kevin Dunn

- Superchunk, *I Hate Music* LP
- So Cow / Image Makers, Split 7"
- Gordon Gano's Army, Self-titled CD-R
- Cleveland Bound Death Sentence, Self-titled LP re-issue
- *Heavy Metal in Baghdad* DVD

#### Kiyoshi Lucky Nakazawa

5. Pu\$\$y Cramps at the Redwood, 10/25/13
4. Trying to understand lyrics to Dillinger Four songs.
3. *Mobile Suit Gundam the Origin* by Yoshiyuki Yasuhiko, published by Vertical
2. Futurebrite, *Part 1* EP. The indomitable Karen Kanen Corea from Hissyfits, Demander, Money Brother and now her own band.
1. Josh Barnett wore our collaborative T-shirt for his walk-out and win at UFC 164 and it was glorious.

#### Kurt Morris

- Top 5 Albums of 2013 in No Particular Order*
- The Rutabega, *Brother the Lights Don't Work*
  - Crusades, *Perhaps You Deliver This Judgment with More Fear Than I Receive It*
  - Coliseum, *Sister Faith*
  - Mark Kozelek & Jimmy Lavalley, *Perils from the Sea*
  - Pelican, *Forever Becoming*

#### Lauren Measure

- Top 5 New-Ish Bands I'm Really Excited About*
- Cayetana
  - All Dogs
  - Personal Best
  - High Dive
  - Vacation

#### Mark Twistworthy

- Crusades, *Perhaps You Deliver...* LP
- Cosmic Psychos, re-issues
- Buck Biloxi & The Fucks, Self-titled LP
- Radioactivity, Self-titled LP
- Secret Prostitutes, *Welcome to Punk* LP

#### Marty Ploy

- Top 5 Albums of 2013*
1. Rumspringer, *Stay Afloat*
  2. Iron Chic, *The Constant One*
  3. RVIVR, *The Beauty Between*
  4. Low Culture, *Screens*
  5. Rational Anthem, *Whatevermind*

#### Matt Average

- See You In Hell, live
- Androids Of Mu, *Blood Robots* LP
- Various Artists, *Cosmic Machine 2* x LP
- Neo Boys, *Sooner or Later 2* x LP
- Various Artists, *Paink: French Punk Anthems 1977-1982* LP

#### Matt Seward

- Canadian Rifle, *Deep Ends*
- Pity Party, *Fine Young Animals*
- Visitors, *Yeti*, tie City Mouse / Weekend Dads 7"
- Charles Bradley, "Ain't It a Sin" RSD 45
- Seasick Records (shop/venue, Birmingham, AL)

#### Matt Werts

- Hysterics, *Can't I Live?*
- Neil Young, *Live at the Cellar Door*
- Guided By Voices, *Alien Lanes*
- Bonnie "Prince" Billy, *Master and Everyone*
- Various Artists, *Jean-Luc Godard: Bandes Originales 1959-1980*

#### Mike Faloon

1. Benny The Jet Rodriguez, *Home. Run.* LP
2. Kim Deal, "Are You Mine?" b/w "Wish I Was" single
3. Kevin Dunn, *Waiting for a Taxi, Not a Bus* (zine)
4. Hussalonia, *Home Taping Is Killing Me* Cassette
5. Sebadoh, *Defend Yourself* LP

#### Mike Frame

1. Upset, *She's Gone* CD
2. Motörhead, *Aftershock* CD
3. Shonna Tucker, *Tell All* CD
4. Royal Thunder, *CVI* CD
5. Chain Letters, *Bad Reflection 7"*

#### Nighthawk

- Nato Coles And The Blue Diamond Band, *Promises to Deliver* LP
- Gateway District, *Old Wild Hearts* LP

- Hospital Job, *Downer Downer Downer* LP
- Lipstick Homicide / The Turkletons, *We're Gonna Need a Bigger Coat...* Split 7"
- Rumspringer, *Stay Afloat* LP

#### Paul Silver

- Top 5 Recent Live Shows*
1. Octa#grape at Bar Pink, San Diego
  2. RVIVR at Tower Bar, San Diego
  3. Sass Dragons at Quenchers, Chicago
  4. The Beat, The Maxies, LA
  5. French Exit, Summer Vacation, Horror Squad at VLHS, Pomona

#### Sal Lucci

1. Gino And The Goons, any and all of their records!
2. Buck Biloxi And The Fucks, any and all of their records!
3. Cosmic Psychos, re-issue LPs
4. Cumstain, *White People Problems* LP
5. Nots, 7"

#### Sean Koeppenick

- Best Christmas Songs Ever!*
1. "Christmas with the Devil" Spinal Tap
  2. "Father Christmas" The Kinks
  3. "Merry Christmas (I Don't Want to Fight Tonight)" The Ramones
  4. "Fuck Christmas" Fear
  5. "Merry Christmas" Face To Face

#### Rene Navarro

- Top 5 Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Injuries of 2013*
1. Bursitis in the shoulder.
  2. Toe dislocated 90°, bones now deformed (fused together).
  3. Fractured ribs.
  4. Fake front tooth broken twice.
  5. Loss of big toenail.

#### Replay Dave

- Top 5 Records I picked Up at Fest 12*
- Iron Chic, *The Constant One*
  - Caves, *Betterment*
  - Worriers, *Cruel Optimist*
  - Pity Party, *Fine Young Animals*
  - Dan Padilla / Down And Outs, Split 7"

#### Rich Cocksedge

- Radioactivity, Self-titled LP
- Bad Sam, *Working Class Holocaust* LP
- Crazy Arm, *Antillectual*, Sweet Empire at The White Rabbit, Plymouth
- Canadian Rifle, *Deep Ends* LP
- Last Words, Self-titled LP

#### Ryan Nichols

1. Cy Barkley & The Way Outsiders, *Mutability* LP
2. Los Saicos, *Demolicion* LP

3. Hugh Cornwell acoustic show at Bronson Bar
4. Murder City Devils and T.S.O.L. at The Observatory
5. Factory Records in Costa Mesa

#### Sean Arenas

- Nobunny, *Secret Songs* LP
- Moxie Beat, Self-titled 12" EP
- Coke Bust, *Confined* LP
- French Exit, *Guts & Black Stuff* LP
- Impalers, Self-titled LP

#### Toby Tober

- Top 5 Movies I Have Enjoyed Recently*
1. *Doug Stanhope: Beer Hall Putsch*
  2. *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy?*
  3. *The Punk Singer*
  4. *Dirty Hands: The Art and Crimes of David Choe*
  5. *Bill Cosby: Far from Finished*

#### Todd Taylor

- Mind Spiders, *Inhumanistic* LP
- Radioactivity, Self-titled LP, Self-titled 7"
- Criminal Damage, *Call of Death* LP tie with Red Dons, *Notes on the Underground 7"*
- Worriers, *Cruel Optimist* LP tie with Canadian Rifle, *Deep Ends* LP tie with RVIVR, *The Beauty Between* LP
- Crusades, *Perhaps You Deliver This Judgment with Greater Fear Than I Receive It* LP
- Libyans, *Expired Language* LP tie with Bümbläätt, *Luctus* LP

#### Tommy Vandervort

1. The Slow Death / The Brokedowns, Split 7"
2. Eyehategod and Black Tusk at Cobra Lounge
3. Crusades, *Perhaps You Deliver This Judgment with Greater Fear Than I Receive It* LP
4. Superchunk, *I Hate Music* LP
5. Quimby's Bookstore, Chicago

#### Yvonne Drazan

- Random Music I Found Online*
1. Ming City Rockers, *Chic and the Motherfuckers*
  2. Dan Croll, *From Nowhere* EP
  3. Nick Waterhouse, *Time's All Gone*
  4. Hanni El Khatib, *Head in the Dirt*
  5. Esteman, *1er Acto*



### #15, THE: Sharon: 7"

Sweet, sweet dripping power pop like chocolate syrup on a triple scoop banana split. What really makes this for me is the vocals. Each member has their different parts that they do; it really feels like a group effort. Dublin by way of Canada pop perfection. The pace slows down a little on the B-side, but only because after "Sharon Shouldn't" you just want to curl up and figure out what just happened to you. This is how 7"s should be done. —Daryl (Sorry State / Alien Snatch)

### ADAM WIDENER: *Make Out!*: 7"

Five songs of extra catchy garage pop, a bit like the early (pre-BYO) output of the Clorox Girls crossed with Joe Jackson's power pop and skinny tie years. Instantly enjoyable, Mr. Widener has written some incredibly fun, stellar pop gems and, impressively, provides for all of the instrumentation on the record by himself. —Jeff Proctor (Fuzz City)

### ANTI NOWHERE LEAGUE: *We Are the League*: 12"

I literally laughed when I saw this record sitting in a pile because it brought me back to my teenage years just looking at the cover and I thought it would be a fun listen, like watching an old movie thinking about how strange it was that you used to take it so seriously. Instead, I got a half an hour of kicking myself because I had forgotten just how fucking *catchy* all these songs are. While this is a far cry from an "essential" punk record by "rock" standards (I'm talking about *London Calling* and *Road to Ruin*), it really stands out as a great genre piece. Though it's typically passed off as a cute piece of smarmy early punk in lieu of the more serious bands like Blitz or the 4-Skins, the League wrote songs that were somehow more accessible than their peers. While they certainly weren't changing anyone's mind about the world we live in thirty years on, this record probably provides a better time capsule about what it was actually like to be a punk in the U.K. in the early '80s. The reissue sounds good and is certainly geared towards the "audiophile" crowd in punk collectors rather than the history buffs, as there is a lack of contextual liner notes (something any of these reissues should contain, in my opinion). —Ian Wise (Drastic Plastic)

### ANTISEEN: *Live Possum!*: CD

In 1994, I thought that punk was ancient since the Ramones were on a twentieth anniversary tour, but now punk is turning forty, with hardcore-era bands like ANTISEEN having thirtieth anniversaries. 2013 marked ANTISEEN's thirtieth year as a

band, which, of course, included a big anniversary show with special guests. They also played several gigs with classic lineups from their past, including the *Eat More Possum* and *Here to Ruin Your Groove* rosters. This isn't ANTISEEN's first live album, but it's a great one. Playing songs not just from the fan favorite *Eat More Possum* LP, they rip through many other hits, especially from their earlier years. A sad fact about live records is that they're usually only for diehard fans, with a handful of exceptions to that rule. But this album does not disappoint and is so chock full of energy, it could serve as a nifty introduction to ANTISEEN to the uninitiated. ANTISEEN remains steadfast in a scene that's given them mixed levels of support over the years. Don't fear ANTISEEN! —Art Ettinger (Jailhouse)

### ATLANTIC THRILLS: *A Day at the Beach*: 7"

I refuse to believe this band is from the East Coast. I'm from the East Coast, lived there damn near thirty years, and bands didn't sound like this when I was actively playing music there. Atlantic Thrills sounds like some landlocked, stuck-in-a-basement Midwest shit. I know this, 'cuz I've been a landlocked Midwesterner for some years now. The bouncy energy, the fun-seeking, good time vibes... You can dance to this,

and shit for sure ain't like this back home. People in, say, Passaic, New Jersey don't know how to fucking dance! Atlantic Thrills should tour with Indiana's Vacation Club. Cover art by *Humanbeing Lawnmower* zinester Ari Spivak. —Sal Lucci (Almost Ready)

### BAD DADDIES / LÖGNHALSMOTTAGNINGEN: *Split*: 7"

There's something in the water out in the desert wastelands of Northern Cali, all those fucked up bands from Sacramento. Bad Daddies can be added to the list: super scrappy femme-fronted punk. Bratty and loose, like riot grrrl on drugs. Flip it over and shit gets even weirder. Lögnhalsmottagningen have really got to do something about their name. Music is more scrappy lo-fi weirdo punk, like some long-lost Swedish treasure from the late '70s or even modern stuff that throws back like the Secret Prostitutes. —Tim Brooks (Emotional Response)

### BAD SAM: *Working Class Holocaust*: LP

Every issue I end up waxing lyrical about the "good old days" of the late '80s on that mean little isle called England. When I very first got into punk at the tender age of thirteen, I used to scour *MRR* from cover to cover, then fire off letters to bands. That's what you did back then. I wrote to lots of people, many who are still friends. My favorite

band at the time were the Cowboy Killers from South Wales—who sounded like nothing else from where I was—Dead Kennedys meets FOD with the craziest singer I have ever seen. Beddis from the CK's would send me his old shirts, records, and giant packages of tapes where I discovered bands like Really Red, Dicks, and the Big Boys. There was no Internet downloading, no fancy reissue; it was tapes from other punks or nothing. Without that friendship I'm not sure I would have ended up where I am today (a grand assertion, but most likely true). The Cowboy Killers imploded in the '90s and since then I have waited for Beddis to get something else rolling. After jail time, kids, and realizing he couldn't resist the pull of DIY punk, we have Bad Sam, featuring Kip the original CK's drummer, some members of Dub War, and other elder statesmen of the South Wales scene. No disappointment here whatsoever. A similar sound to the Killers, maybe slightly more metallic with Beddis's deranged vocals and songs like "Black John Wayne" (about Obama), "Snake with Tits" (about Thatcher), "Dicks with Dogs," etc. This disc was self-released with only three hundred copies, so I would suggest getting out there and grabbing one before it's eBay time. One of my favorite releases this year by far. Magic. —Tim Brooks (Kriminal, kriminalgood@gmail.com)

### BÄDDAT FOR TRÜBBEL: *Self-titled*: 7"

Clean-channel guitar rock/punk stuff with a singer whose voice has that rare quality that makes you wonder if yer playing the record at the right speed. Songs are short in duration, two of 'em peppy and two slow to keep yer experience nice 'n' rounded. —Jimmy Alvarado (Skrammel)

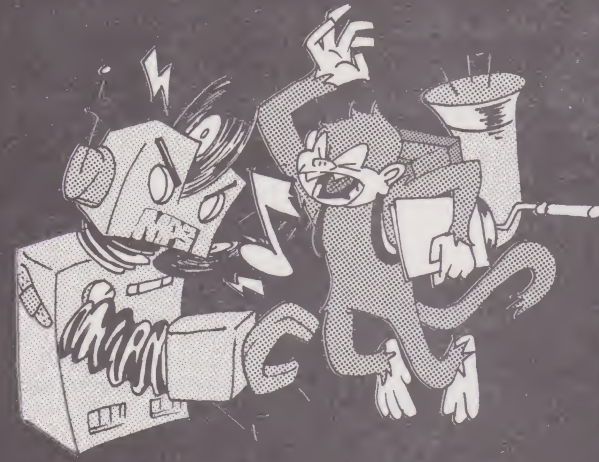
### BE MY DOPPLEGANGER: *Artless*: LP

So this took a long time to get out to the masses, but hell yeah if it was not worth the wait. Think Dead Boys or The Zeros but with even more melodic goodness jammed into every sweaty crevice. "A to B" rocks from note one and the manic pace is maintained until the very last fade. "Floor to Shoulder" and "In Love" are so good it really made me put down by adult beverage a couple times to do a quick rewind. Forget what you've heard and start here. —Sean Koepenick (It's Alive)

### BEAST: *Dead or Alive*: CD

Nugent. Sabbath. Priest. Black Flag. These T-shirts make one or more appearances in the band/touring photo collage on the inside CD layout. Beast play a more MC5 song structured (as opposed to The BellRay's more

## RECORD REVIEWS



"Who wants to get stabbed anywhere, let alone at your two favorite retail establishments?"

—Sal Lucci

BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS: *Self-titled*: 7"

## RAZORCAKE RECORD REVIEW GUIDELINES AND FAQs

• The address to send all review material is Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. You may address it to specific reviewers. Just make sure they're active.

• Full album art is required for a review. Pre-releases go into the trash. Don't treat us like second-rate citizens. We're all volunteers here.

• Are you really sending us a download card or a link to review? Seriously? That's weak. Many of our contributors don't have fancy computers. Nope, we won't review 'em.

• You're sending us a CD-R of a piece of vinyl you're releasing to cut on costs? Please don't pull that stunt with us. We know mail's expensive, but we send full copies of the zine as a thanks to all who send us material to review (if your address is provided).

• It is very important to put a postal address on each and every piece of music sent in. Many packages get separated and given to different reviewers.

• Over a decade of music reviews can be found at [razorcake.org](http://razorcake.org). Use our handy "search" function on the site to see if your music has been reviewed. Tight.

• Reviews may take six months. Be patient. We're bi-monthly and have reviewers worldwide.

Stooges' attack) NWOBHM-solo-peppered (but much, much more Swedish) metallic *rawk*. There is no argument, while less throaty soul belting than Lisa Kekaula, that Maria can sing, her vocals easily being the most commanding thing about this release. Bands like Beast walk a fine line between staying engaging and becoming boring bar rock. Being from Sweden, they either have their tongues planted firmly enough in cheek or are playing with such conviction they command you to don the denim vest, grow a moustache, crack a Falcon beer, and throw the horns. —Matt Seward (Gaphals)

#### **BEAT, THE / MAXIES, THE: Split 7"**

I've never had anyone bring up a review of mine as often as Paul Collins has brought up my (uh, shall we just say, "non-positive?") *Razorcake* review of the *Flying High* album. And, while I hardly imagine the King of Power Pop was losing sleep for the past five years trying to figure out how to get me back on board again, whatever he's been doing has been working out pretty well for all parties concerned; I've quite enjoyed his last half-decade of live and recorded output. Hooray for the power of positive insults! In any event, The Beat deliver a Buddy Holly-ish number called "Baby I'm in Love with You" and a pretty rippin' re-make of the Collins-penned *Nerves/Breakaways* classic, "Walking out on Love." My only gripe these days is that I wish some munificent glottal deity would roll about a quarter-century of mileage off the odometer on Paul's throat. The Maxies have a pair of tunes on the flipside, and sound like what the McCrackins might have sounded like if the eggs were from Greenland. Why neither of their songs was called "Walking out on Suaasat" is not clear to me. Still, I think Paul claims victory once again. **BEST SONG:** The Beat, "Walking out on Love," duh. **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Seal Club Sitta." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** There are three Wisconsinites on the cover of this record! And none playing on it! I admit it is safer that way. —Rev. Nørh (Radius, radiusreccs.com)

#### **BEAVER: Self-titled: LP**

One of many DC punk acts lost in the wake of the Dischord Records juggernaut that continues to serve as the de facto face of that town's scene, Beaver was a hardcore act that released a smokin' EP before a member or two went on to massive fame in Government Issue. As these tales usually go, said EP quickly went outta print and remained criminally obscure until the whole punk rarities gold rush pulled it from oblivion and suddenly it started commanding the kind of prices most folks wouldn't pay for a large screen T.V. In his inimitable wisdom, the good Doctor has seen what ails average punters like you and me who love the tunes but not the exorbitant prices and has reissued Beaver's recorded output—the EP tracks, plus assorted demo tracks—as a limited edition LP on snazzy black vinyl (white, if yer

lucky, punk). The lion's share of what's here is classic hardCore, with short tunes meted out with a taut delivery, all of which easily stack up against the better known names of that scene. Only five hundred out there, kiddies, so I suggest ye get moving pronto before you're again having to sell yer washing machine to procure a copy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

#### **BIO CRISIS: En Memoria al Dolor: CD**

Heavy-as-fuck, down-tuned, and dark hardcore from Tijuana, Baja California with a very bleak outlook on and contempt for the STD that is human life. It's hard not to musically compare Bio Crisis to Tragedy (especially with the acoustic interludes) though they do an excellent job of affixing certain elements of their own to this style—such as an awesome acid-throated vocal delivery and varying drum beats—that keep the music from becoming stale and ineffective, as has become customary for most bands who think they can hold a candle to the Portland crust lords. For fans of Profane Existence bands and anyone who dares not wear a leather jacket to a Drop Dead show. —Juan Espinosa (Bloodpact / Mundo En Kaos / Detesta / Culture War DIY / Replenish / Negligent / Akraza / Tomorrow Belongs To Us, biocrisistj@gmail.com)

#### **BISHOPS GREEN: Self-titled: 12" EP**

More influenced by early U.K. bands like Stiff Little Fingers and Sham 69 than by North American punk, Vancouver's Bishops Green hits the scene with this super six-song EP. Greg Huff's vocals have such a refined high end, that it almost sounds like a studio effect at first blush. I bet he has a blazing stage presence. Even though Bishops Green is a new band, Huff is well known in Canada for being in Alternate Action, Subway Thugs, and Lancasters. Definitely a band to watch for; Bishops Green knows what it's doing and is anything but green. —Art Ettinger (Pirates Press)

#### **BLACK GOD: Three: 7"**

Another killer release from these Kentucky punk/hardcore stalwarts. Very much in the same vein of their previous two 7"s: thick heavy Greg Sage/Speedo riffage coupled with Rob Pennington's unmistakable vocals. A dark, hard-rocking vibe with a hardcore spirit and the bleak, urgent sincerity that permeates this whole Louisville scene. Just awesome, as always. —Dave Williams (No Idea)

#### **BLIND PIGS: Capitânia: 10"**

*Capitânia* is the new release from the long-running Brazilian streetpunk band Blind Pigs. Celebrating twenty years as a band in 2013, Blind Pigs embarked on a lengthy tour of Brazil and reissued their back catalog, as well as this new record. Catchy without being corny, and belting out their sing-song anthems in Portuguese, Blind Pigs are definitely on the happier, bouncier end of the street scene. Not unlike Klasse Kriminale, it's taken Blind Pigs a lot longer than it should to gain international

recognition. In South America, they're achieving Rancid-like status, but "Joe Slow in the back row" types are just now hearing about them. I too was a blind pig, but now I see. —Art Ettinger (Pirates Press)

#### **BOILING POINT: Self-titled: 7"**

Riffy, speedy Slovakian hardcore. Fans of 625 Thrashcore's catalog will enjoy this one. Buzzsaw guitars and ripping drums with vocals shouted in English. The record begins on a serious note ("Disillusioned"), tackling the state of the band's homeland: "It's been more than twenty years since the socialism fell. New regime blessed the highest class while the poorest people live in hell." That second part seems sadly familiar here in the so-called oldest democracy in the world... But most good music needs balance, and these guys do that with a humorous tip of the hat to us record collectors on "Wax": "Touch the plastic, sniff the cover. Diagnosis: vinyl lover!" Ha! Excellent seven-song debut with fantastic packaging. —Chad Williams (Analog Freaks, contact@analogfreaks.net, analogfreaks.net)

#### **BRAINDEAD, THE:**

##### **Welcome to the Revolution: CD**

I believe it is my duty as a record reviewer of integrity and honesty to give each record I get a fair shot. This one was a case of true grit and extreme endurance. This is a live-in-the studio recording from 2005 from this Seattle outfit. Musically, these guys have some chops. The vocals left me cold. Cookie monster vocals just don't translate to my personal enjoyment. They also cover a Venom tunes that has already been covered by over five bands. And when you are competing with The Meatmen, why bother? If this was my lump of coal for the holidays I will take it on the chin. —Sean Koepnick (1332)

#### **BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS:**

##### **Self-titled: 7"**

##### **BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS / GIORGIO MURDERER: Split 7"**

Angry, middle aged and stupid... like me! Near-perfect sonic assault, with the goal of dumbing down your senses, fuck you very much for asking. This is *Shit-Fi*, pure and simple. So much so that I can't tell if the chorus of "Not Getting Stabbed" are "at the record store" or "at the liquor store." Could be—should be—both. Who wants to get stabbed anywhere, let alone at your two favorite retail establishments? Total Punk scores yet another winner with the first of these two 7"s. Man, Total Punk is the place to be these days. Total scum-punk (if you don't believe me, check the liner notes on the Holotrash record). I'm pretty sure Giorgio Murderer is Mr. Biloxi in disguise, playing a synthesizer. Probably why he needs his shit back. —Sal Lucci (Total Punk / Holotrash, buckbiloxi@gmail.com)

#### **BÜMBKLAATT: Luctus: LP**

Don't know about you, but I periodically need music that pecks my brain clean. So clean I can barely think outside the

music. So clean that it's a black hole in there. Music that's all claws and talons and beaks ripping. Separate the decay from the bone. Rupture corrupting thoughts. Lacerate. Birds of prey on mental carrion. *Luctus* is a gnarly album, but like a flock of crows interrupted mid-feast, there's also a dark, glistening beauty to their action, their pure movements, their outspread wings in flight. It's instinct—death is a part of life. In more musical terms, it's melody-and-bulldozer-at-the-landfill hardcore, symphonic crust that stands shoulder to shoulder (both in time served as a band and recorded output) with Tragedy and From Ashes Rise. Bümblkäätt is bilocated in San Diego and Tijuana and one of the most underrated-outside-of-their-hometown hardcore bands in the country. Put down that melting, dripping flavor-of-the-week popsicle and get in on a long-running dark feast. —Todd Taylor (Prank)

#### **CAFETERIA DANCE FEVER:**

##### **...With Love: 2 x 7"**

How bad ass would it be if the Beach Boys had recorded a punk album? That is what Cafeteria Dance Fever's new double 7" reminds me of. In a world of punk bands who take themselves way too seriously, CDF is just fun music. As a side note, the theme of the cover art, a blood-soaked vintage prom a la *Carrie*, is continued on in a brilliant video for *Night Of The Lepus*, which I found on YouTube. —John Mule (Hovercraft)

#### **CANADIAN RIFLE: Deep Ends: 9-song LP**

Some things in life are pretty much figured out. Be wary of shenanigans like, "We've re-invented the pizza!" This one doesn't have dough!" Or "You thought you knew burritos? Try a wrap!" So why do dopes who are searching for identity through musical purchases fall for, "The re-invention of music! Kittens playing piccolos! You'll shit yourself!" Oh, I understand the power of novelty, but c'mon, we're trying to have some meaningful interaction between "lifestyle purchases" here. Canadian Rifle aren't reinventing nothing, but they're perfecting the ingredients, the recipe, the fire times, the delivery, the presentation. Up front is Jake's gruff delivery (triangulated somewhere between Hot Water Music's Chuck Ragan and Dan Padilla's J.Wang), backed by strong, melodic, and much-happier-sounding-than-the lyrics bass and drums. By no way am I saying *Deep Ends* sounds generic or called in. Far from it. It's like listening to craftsmen far past their apprenticeships and well into their mastery. You're in good hands. Bummed-as-hell, dead-deer-smashing-through-windshield hands. But good hands nonetheless. They even add another option to songs to sing at funerals beyond Hickey: "Going to Get Fucked up When You Die." No goals. No dreams. —Todd Taylor (Dirt Cult)

#### **CAR 10: Self-titled: 7"**

Car 10 is Japanese pop punk with this sort of dreamy feel to them. That is really the best I can explain it. That, and although they don't really sound

particularly like them, I was reminded of the Bananas. It all adds up to another great bands that I had never heard before. Another win for me! —Ty Stranglehold (Snuffy Smiles)

#### CHIXDIGGIT!: *Double Diggits!*: CD

So this month, my education in pop punk continues with this reissue of the band's sophomore release, *Born on the First of July*, and its follow up, *From Scene to Shining Scene*, with about another album's worth of bonus tracks tacked on for good measure. I mentioned my continuing education above as I purposely kind of steered clear of the genre historically and have been happily brought up to speed by the wizard who assigns review material at Razorcake HQ. As remorseful as I have been about my past finds, I am perhaps even more remorseful that I never checked these guys out sooner. Had I done so, I would have found that these guys came up with some positively mean hooks and have a knack for writing some clever songs without coming off as overwrought. Thankfully, they leave the three-part harmonies at home too, which is refreshing. I was a bit overwhelmed at the sheer amount of material on this re-release. While it's clear that this is a great value—two albums and the bonus material on one disc—it's perhaps a matter of having too much of a good thing. I found that listening to the songs as individual albums was invariably more satisfying than listening to the full package. —Garrett Barnwell (Fat Wreck)

#### COKE BUST: *Confined*: LP

Paint-by-numbers hardcore riffs and black-and-white collage politics can become pretty tiresome. The same sort of sounds and images have been recycled for over thirty years. Coke Bust, although treading familiar water, clearly obliterated the memo. They possess the doggedness of Econochrist and the vicious assault of hardcore trailblazers, like Deep Wound and Void, on the LP's nine blitting tunes (clocking-in under nine minutes). The songs maintain constant anger and pessimism throughout and never detour into cheeseball call-and-response territory. And it never feels like tough guy bullshit, even though Nicktape's vocals make my throat itch. The longest song, "Red Line," suggests more developed rage the next time around. Ultimately, it's all supercharged stuff—albeit overly reverential—but, sometimes, familiar noises will suffice. —Sean Arenas (Grave Mistake)

#### CONTRAST ATTITUDE:

##### *Black or White: 7" EP*

Four bulldozing blasts of manic d-beat fury from these veteran Japanese punx. The metaphors for this kind of chaos are harder and harder to come up with but the music, thankfully, more than speaks for itself. Actually, the d-beat subgenre in hardcore as of late has been steadily impressive as is also evidenced by fellow ragers such as See You In Hell, Desperat, Kvoterigen, and Condition. Bitchin' all around and worthy of those crumpled up, beer-soaked dollars in

your camouflage cargo shorts, you filthy punker! —Juan Espinosa (Insane Society, contrastattitude@yahoo.co.jp)

#### COSMIC PSYCHOS: *Self-titled and Down on the Farm*: LP re-issues

How can you *not* love a band that sings about the joys of eating sausage? The reason I'm not including *Go the Hack* here is because I already own the original, and it's in good enough shape that I don't need to replace it. Strictly budgetary reasons, you understand. Looking at the cover of the *Go the Hack* reissue, the only difference I notice is the color contrast seems sharper. Anyhoo, this is the kind of Aussie rock'n'roll I dig. Hard-driving, meat and potatoes type shit. And beer. On top of being able to finally own these early records, I got to see the Psychos at Gonerfest 10, as they toured in support of the *Blokes You Can Trust* documentary. Hadn't seen them since 1998! The self-titled EP is not at all what I expected. The fuzz bass definitely drives the songs, as in many of their songs, but these tunes are more groove-oriented, some clocking in at six or seven minutes. *Down on the Farm*, however, cuts to the bone and gets me where I need to go! Thudding rock'n'roll punk. Working class music by actual members of the working class (singer/bassist Ross Knight still owns the farm). Goner truly scored with these records. —Sal Lucci (Goner/Aarght!)

#### COSMIC PSYCHOS: *Self-titled*: LP

Re-mastered version of this Australian band's debut LP that originally came

out in 1987. I'd never heard this band before, but after one listen I realized I'd obviously been listening to bands that have been influenced by them for years. It sounds like the missing link between The Saints and The Sultans. I also feel like there are exact riffs that Sex Vid would later play. Heavy, plodding punk that hits you like a punch to the gut, and then drinks all your beer. Solid, rockin' tunes with sporadic, nasty guitar freak outs. —Daryl (Goner / Aarght)

#### COSMIC PSYCHOS: *Go the Hack*: LP

Blunt instruments with outrageous torque moving cubic yards of dirt. There's nothing pretty about the Cosmic Psychos, nothing complicated (fight, fuck, work, drink, lift weights, repeat) and that's their charm. (One song's just called "Pub.") *Go the Hack* was their second full length, originally released in 1989 in Australia, and if there was ever a missing link between Lemmy Mötörhead's no-bullshitting thud, mid-period Sabbath's sonic rake of blood and tension, and proto-grunge, this'd be it. My memory's that the Cosmic Psychos (formed in '82) and Beasts Of Bourbon predated what would happen in the Pacific Northwest in the early '90s, but since they weren't ever as popular as their American counterparts (Nirvana, Mudhoney, L7, Soundgarden), that bit of grunge history gets glossed over in "official" reconstructions for sake of convenience and self-service, as should be expected. No matter. This is a welcome and timely reissue. Ross, Cosmic Psychos lead singer, continues to run his farm. —Todd Taylor (Aarght / Goner)

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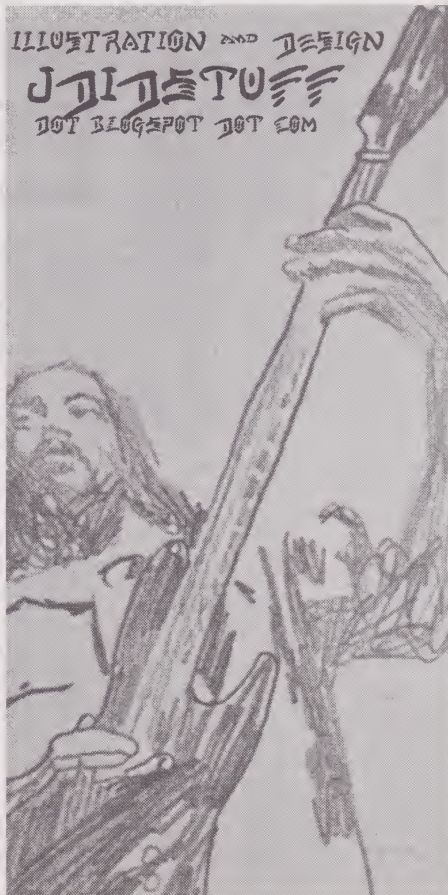


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**CRIMINAL DAMAGE: *Call of Death*: LP** Misery can be inspirational. Poverty can breed meaningful art. Criminal Damage play top-tier existential street punk. Instead of working class bravado, questionable nationalism, and gang stompers, they create a bleak, high-contrast grey and black world. *Call of Death* is also an LP of disparity between its words and sounds. Textually, it's Orwell future-present. Tough and godless. Cracked concrete, cracked teeth. Never-bright skies. Broken cities. Empty cupboards. Solitary drinking. Fucked fuckedness of which the bad fucking has no end. Lyrically, it's in line with early '80s peace punk, thorned with spoils of barbed wire cynicism, then wheat pasted over with the sticky hopelessness of modern existence. Musically, however, Criminal Damage burn brightly like a lighthouse, shining a path through ever-quickening darkness. Rough, melodic barking is buckled to knifey, slashing, guitar work. Snapping drums give this batch of songs a rigorous and crisp feeling. The enterprise is reminiscent of Blitz, Partisans, Templars, Cock Sparrer, and Hard Skin. Good company to have, in my book. Great record. —Todd Taylor (Feral Ward)

**CRUSADES: *Perhaps You Deliver This Judgment with Greater Fear Than I Receive It*: CD/LP**

I've been curious to see how Crusades would follow up to their outstanding debut LP, *The Sun Is Down and the*

*Night Is Riding In*. And their second album with an equally lengthy title, *Perhaps You Deliver This Judgment with Greater Fear than I Receive It*, is just as good, if not better, than the first. At ten songs (nine, if you don't include the spoken word intro track), this thirty-three minute album is tight and punches hard. The band is still catchy as hell, which is really remarkable considering that the lyrical content centers around a sixteenth-century heretic, Giordano Bruno. Somehow they are able to take lines such as "Fear not the shaft; fear not the hunter's aim: into the splendors of the living flame" and make them appealing. All of this just goes to show how well these four Canucks have been able to marry their metal and pop punk influences. The assault of three vocalists also impresses. The listener is never bored with one singer's tone, as another one pops in on the next track (and sometimes even in the same song). They all complement one another well. The band certainly is making their metal influence felt on more than just some of the lyrics, though. There were times I heard Propagandhi (especially when the vocals and guitar were both exceptionally harsh), but Crusades stand unique in their lyrical content and preference to lean toward the melodic side of things as opposed to the thrash side. What I love about Crusades is that they are able to take my love for metal and channel it through my interest in pop punk (a guilty pleasure). While a normally carefree, often silly genre, Crusades make pop punk sound dark and

slightly sinister. *Perhaps You Deliver...* is further proof of their unique place in the punk scene. —Kurt Morris (No Idea)

**CUNT LICKER: *This Mess Is Home*: CD-R**

They call this their debut album, but come on guys, just 'cause you put a hand-cut sticker label on a CD-R don't elevate it from demo to album, especially with that boom box recording. Sorry, facts are facts! That said, this is something I actually wish I could hear properly. As you might suspect, this is in Antiseen / Hammerlock / Dwarves territory and with songs like "The Fuckin' Song," "How to Stuff a Taco" and "Drink My Life Away," you know it's time to crack a "cold Coors in a can" and use your favorite Yankee liberal's picture for double barrel target practice. (Jokes, people!) Attention any Kentuckian with gear: help get these fuckers a decent recording! Also maybe a bassist. —Chad Williams (No Hope In Hell, [rever.nation.com/label/nohopeinhellrecords](http://rever.nation.com/label/nohopeinhellrecords))

**DALAPLAN: *Self-titled*: CD**

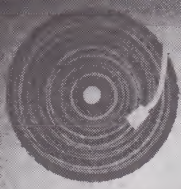
As on prior EPs, these Swedes mix equal parts '60s beat rock and '80s new wave with modern recording technology and serve up with a combustible, beguiling stew that'll get a body groovin' and singin' like a fool in a foreign language. Makes a guy wish American radio wasn't so language-phobic, snooty, and irrelevant, 'cause songs like "Paniken Växer" should be dominating the airwaves. —Jimmy Alvarado (Gaphals, [gaphals.se](http://gaphals.se))

**DEAD MOOSE: *The Night*: 7"**

Geez, guys, I guess all the good band names are taken, huh? Anyway, a reasonable outing by a Finnish trio that sounds uncannily like they're fronted by Bruce from the Detonators. Solid enough batch of songs that are almost over before they start. Brevity helps, sure, but it's all still a little unmemorable, and I really don't think we need any more tunes about zombies, do you? Sorry, guys, gotta pass on this one. —Keith Rosson (Dead Moose)

**DEFEATER: *Letters Home*: CD/LP**

This five-piece Boston hardcore band continues the literary device around which they have built their entire band: the struggles of a family in the post-World War II years. It's gritty and dark, with murder, guilt, and hopelessness. This is not a lyrically upbeat album. And yet it is all done in a mature manner. Many bands wouldn't be able to utilize the device effectively, but Defeater does so in a way that makes me want to know more about these characters; I'd love to read short stories of these individuals. The shorter run time (ten songs in thirty-four minutes) makes each track seem urgent and important without being rushed. Defeater gets their point across and moves on to the next track all the way up until the closer, "Bled Out," the longest on the album, that culminates with vocalist Derek Archambault yelling, "All I see is the bastard in me," the same lyric that anchored the opening track, "Bastards." Yet *Letters Home* isn't a blistering album, as there



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is melody even if Archambault's vocals are primarily screaming. Hell, when I heard the guitar at the beginning of "No Saviour" and "Bled Out," I would've thought I was listening to something from Sonic Youth's *Murray Street*. Joe Longobardi's drumming is worth particular note, as it's not only solid, but also at times complicated. He doesn't just settle for fills in spots where other drummers might have done so. The point is that Defeater hasn't gone soft, nor is their fierceness unbridled. Instead, they've found a way to put it all together just right. —Kurt Morris (Bridge 9)

#### DEZERTER: *Blasfemia*: LP

Here's a reissue of these Polish punks' fifth LP, the original having emerged in 1992. *Blasfemia* contains no shortage of ripping solos and intricate basslines, rocking hardest when the band locks into these irresistible metal grooves. An atmospheric chorus effect cuts in and out, reminiscent of darker '90s hardcore in the vein of Inside Out. Robert Matera's vocals are at once bitterly venomous and catchy as hell. Luckily for me, English translations accompany the Polish lyrics—I've read that some of their other translations have been lacking, but these are more or less on point. The lyrics are heavy with angst in the true sense of the word: the crushing anxiety of existence, a suffocating sickness that's futile to resist. The sentiment is all the more powerful given Poland's history of censorship and political repression. For me, the first truly cathartic moment of the album

comes halfway through "Pierwszy Raz," when Matera's threatening vocals erupt into a seething, snarling rage. The rest of the album never lets up as it oscillates between haunting, metal-tinged hardcore and straightforward, melodic punk rock. If you've been sleeping on this classic for any part of the last twenty years, now is an excellent time to catch up. —Indiana Laub (Pasazer, pasazer@pasazer.pl, pasazer.pl)

#### DIONNA: *Avenue X*: CD

When I was fourteen or fifteen, the act of buying a new record was an instance of titanic financial and emotional investment. Like most kids that age, I generally felt pretty shitty and was staking a huge chunk of my liquid assets and also my complete short-term emotional well-being on the supposition that the record purchased was gonna SAVE MY FUCKING SOUL. Almost everything I had was riding on the wager that THIS RECORD WOULD BE SO FUCKING FANTASTIC that it would change my life immediately; my problems wouldn't disappear, but they *would* be rendered irrelevant. My life would take a new and awesome quantum leap this way or that, and, once that occurred, pretty much everything else could kiss my ass. I'm thinking of the times when I dropped the needle in the groove of "Rock & Roll Girl" or "Cretin Hop" for the first time—HUGE, life-changing events, never to be repeated. I'm not sure why some horny loner fourteen or fifteen year old kid would buy this CD—other than the fact that there's a girl dressed

in nothing but an American flag and a goofy hat on the cover—but, if one did, and he plopped it on his music-producing device, glum and alienated and forlorn, and the first thing he heard was some punky rock diva growling "I WISH SOMEONE WOULD FUCK ME... TONIGHT!!!"—would it be one of those massive, life-changing events for him, where the virtual presence of some imaginary kindred soul suddenly shed light in the darkness of insanity? Would he bond to this record in the manner of how feral wiener dogs raised by mallards don't know they're not ducks? I think it's possible. If not, I feel no shame in giving it the benefit of the doubt. I, of course, am too old and jaded to imagine I am anything but a feral wiener dog, so I think this mostly sounds like what I imagine L7 would have sounded like if Rod Swenson would have managed them and wrote their songs instead of doing similarly unto the Plasmatics. The one exception to this is "Come Home," which reminds me that no matter how much "I wish someone would fuck me tonight" the punky rock starlets hit ya with, in the end, they all really only wanna sing "Me and Bobby McGee" anyhow. Oh well, best of luck with the fucking, dearie. BEST SONG: "Tonight." MOST PLASMATICS-LIKE SONG TITLE: "4:20 24/7." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Marky Ramone plays drums on three songs on this record, but it sounds kinda like he was never in the same room with anyone else in the band when recording his drums...kinda like the instrumental break in "Dream Lover" by

the Plasmatics! AHA! THE SMOKING GUN!!! —Rev. Norb (Rokarola)

#### DIRTBOMBS, THE:

##### *Ooey Gooy Chewy Ka-Blooyey!*: CD

The long-threatened Dirtbombs bubblegum album! If memory serves me correctly, Mick Collins' original idea for The Dirtbombs was to have each release be a different concept. (Who woulda thunk the band responsible for *Horndog Fest* could have put out a pop record?) This batch o' tunes is good, captures the spirit of '70s bubblegum rock, but Mick Collins has too much soul to write a true pop album. You can feel this even in the first note on the first song ("Sugar on Top"). The Dirtbombs patented fuzz is indeed present. "Crazy for You" might be the catchiest, taking you on a trip backwards in musical time, showing you how The Ramones put their own spin on bubblegum music. To me, the Beach Boys-esque trio of songs ("The Sunshine Suite") was only good for one or two listens. I've often thought that the bubblegum genre is too silly and childish, relying heavily on double entendre. So with that said, the pervert in me hopes "We Come in the Sunshine" means something filthy. —Sal Lucci (In The Red)

#### DIVISION FOUR: *1983 Demo Cassette*: LP

Here's what I was able to dig up about this bad boy: Division Four was an early '80s band hailing from Perth, Australia that managed to spurt out this, their sole recorded output, in 1983



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before fading back into obscurity. The titular demo has become quite the collector's item, so this reissue will no doubt be hailed 'n' huzzahed in certain quarters, and with good reason: the shit's pretty danged good. Dual bass guitars, drums, synths 'n' vocals bubble and brood aplenty, but ain't averse to getting all punky-aggressive on occasion so that their results are in just as good company with mid-'80s UK punk as they are with post-punk and the quirkier wing of the new wave. Fuggin' choice listening here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Smart Guy)

#### DOT WIGGIN BAND: *Ready! Get! Go!*: CD

Dot Wiggin is hopefully a familiar name as the lead guitarist and front woman of The Shaggs. *Ready! Get! Go!* is Wiggin's first new recordings in over forty years. For the uninitiated, The Shaggs' (1968-1975) music was sonically more revolutionary than punk rock. The Shaggs were inimitable—true pioneers of outsider music in the rock era (although that was never the band's intention—Wiggin and Co. were sincerely creating their own music from scratch). Unfortunately, they were too far out there to sell any records. (To get the band's story, check the Internet or the outdated-but-great *Songs in the Key of Z*.) *Ready! Get! Go!* is a great album. Wiggin gets backing from people who can play. They support her well in most instances, only occasionally infringing/imposing on the uniqueness of Wiggin's work. That being said, *Ready! Get! Go!* was tastefully done. If you're

a Shaggs fan, you probably already own this album. If you're on the fence about picking it up, rest assured: this is another great album by Dot Wiggin that captures the uniqueness of her songwriting, done with great understanding and support by the band and the label. Wiggin's imprint is still there and putting her in a more "musical" environment (the album includes a cover of "End of the World") is rewarding. Way to go, Dot. —Ryan Leach (Alternative Tentacles)

#### DRUGLORDS OF THE AVENUES: *"Macgowans Seeth"* b/w "Forward to Fun": 7"

As far as I'm concerned, the gravel-voiced Johnny "Peebucks" Bonnel can front as many fucking bands as he wants and every single one will have a fighter's chance with me. I'm a huge fan of the legendary San Francisco-based Swingin' Utters, and the more folky, Pogues-inspired Filthy Thieving Bastards. As a side note, seeing the latter tour with the Pogues' Spyder Stacey is one of my all-time favorite memories. Fans of any and all of the previously name-dropped bands and artists should not be disappointed by this release. Bonnel's voice and writing are in prime form here, and the rest of Druglords Of The Avenues provide as good a backing band as anyone could wish for. —John Mule (Pirates Press)

#### DUMBSTRUCK: *It's Still Broke. The First Two Records*: CD

No fucking brainer. Timely reissue of one of the 2000's most underrated and overlooked bands. Post Ripcord, pre-

Violent Arrest hardcore ripping. While every old cunt from back in the day is reforming, Ripcord moved on, changed names, and still delivered. Sometimes we forget there are really talented people buried in the mire of punk and hardcore. Steve "Baz" Ballam's resume speaks for itself, Ripcord, Heresy, Dumbstruck and now Violent Arrest. He is the master of channeling the sounds of Boston and Sweden into a melting pot that has since been rehashed through bands like Boston Strangler and No Tolerance. This is the backbone of Ripcord with a crusty singer. SSD and Siege filtered through the Varukers. The 7" is unstoppable and worth the price of entry alone. Again, thanks Boss Tuneage for delivering. —Tim Brooks (Boss Tuneage)

#### EPICYCLE:

##### *You're Not Gonna Get It 1978-81*: CD

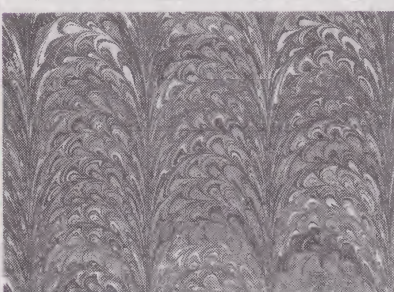
Just when you think that the *Killed by Death* series and its myriad of imitators has squeezed the last bit o' goodness from the underground, another gem plops right into yer lap. Epicycle was a band outta Chicago that released several singles and an LP during the titular years, yet somehow have gone relatively unnoticed in the years since despite the adoration of early fans who went on to great success during the underground's "grunge" era. The music here, culled from the aforementioned releases as well as demo tracks and one live cut, is giddily good from a band that gleefully defies any immediate assessments—just when you've got 'em pegged as a

buncha street hoods cribbing influences from the same records as the Runaways and the Damned, they wrench you in the earhole with rough and tumble power pop complete with twangy guitars and multi-part harmonies—and stands as another great example of an era when the whole point to "new" music was to experiment and create instead of playing to the same staid, cookie-cutter pigeonhole. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac)

#### ESPECTROSTATIC: *Self-titled*: LP

An instrumental album by Alex Cuervo of the Hex Dispensers and Brotherhood Of Electricity. Compared to the Hex Dispensers' fast-driving, Ramones/Misfits-concise stabs of songs that watershed around repeated phrases, Espectrostatic is almost the opposite on the surface—no words, long song structures invoking alien landscapes turning from night to day, sounds as overlapping textures, synthesizers with the keys depressed for stretches (and if there are guitars, they're definitely not the focus). But there is some overlap to Alex's previously released material. Same mind. Different production. There's a walnut-sized part of the brain called the temporoparietal junction. If it gets worked, it can lead to adverse effects, like difficulty making moral decisions and the production of out-of-body experiences. This record's creepy, like unearthly fog billowing underneath the threshold instead of an axe splintering a door (smoke opposed to blood). It's atmosphere, insidious patience building, marching, swelling,


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constricting, releasing. It sounds like the score to a movie set in outer space made by ghosts. Intriguing. —Todd Taylor (Trouble In Mind)

#### FALL, THE: *Re-Mit: 7"*

Is it me, or does Mark E. Smith, with each successive Fall release, sound more and more like your drunk uncle hollering random shit while some band plays in the background? —Jimmy Alvarado (Cherry Red)

#### FIRE EXIT: *Time Wall: 7"*

Another reissue from Last Laugh, this time a one-off single from an obscure Scottish punk band originally released in 1978. The title track is a potent bit of slashing-guitar and anger-type punk and the flip, "Talkin' About Myself," is a bit more sloppy, introspective 'n' brooding revolving a two-to-three chord riff. Essential? Not really, but it is a good single. —Jimmy Alvarado (Last Laugh)

#### FIRE RETARDED: *High Horse: 7"*

To date, I don't think I've heard a band that sounds this much like The Motards. Seriously, this could've been on Empty Records, if the label still existed (RIP). Sloppy, fun, and fast garage, just the way we all should've been taught. Fire Retarded have the rolling, up-tempo, drum technique down pat. Like Nine Pound Hammer did once upon a time—though this group is less country-fried. Apparently, there's a member of The Hussy in this outfit. And while The Hussy is great, they sound nothing like

this single, so keep 'em separate. Is this a new trend? Are more bands going to bring this sound back? I fucking hope so. —Steve Adamyk (Glory Hole, gloryholerecords.com)

#### FIRST BASE: *Self-titled: CD*

Bouncy, buzzsaw bop-pop for retro-lovin' futurists. They keep the delivery Ramones-straightforward, the hooks dripping straight outta Bay City, and the sound authentically apple-pie-and-dimples clean. This stuff is hard to pull off without drowning in a puddle of saccharine, but they do so in spades, with one bubbly hit after another. —Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac)

#### FLOOR ABOVE, THE: *Bishop: LP*

This is the epitome of my favorite type of new modern hardcore band... fast, noisy, lo-fi, and seemingly nihilistic. I'll use the band NASA Space Universe as a point of reference, but the audio fidelity of this record sounds way worse than anything they've done—like if you dubbed your older brother's black metal tapes playing through his stereo speakers to a boom box using the built-in microphone. Yes, it sounds that shitty, but I mean that totally in the best way. There are twenty blistering songs here that will surely not disappoint if you like your punk rock fast with a low fidelity and DIY aesthetic firmly in place. —Mark Twistworthy (Savage Quality)

#### FM 359: *Some Folks: 7"*

Members of Street Dogs and Dropkick Murphys try their damndest to be

the next Eagles. Seriously gorgeous packaging with a "Maker's Mark" type wax seal, but not much else worth the trouble. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pirates Press)

#### FOTTUTTISSIMA PELLICCERIA ELSA:

##### *Self-titled: LP*

Another long-forgotten release by a long lost band gets pulled from the early '80s void, dusted off, and reintroduced to the world of the living, if only for a brief moment. Virtually nil is apparently known about the band other than that they once called Italy home and, judging from the cassette packaging, weren't strangers to the whole anarcho punk thing. Make no false assumptions based on that info that you're gonna get something that lives between Raw Power and Crass, though. No-ho-ho. That would be a mistake. First off, the sound of the whole endeavor sounds like it came straight from a boom box, quite a common practice among the more financially challenged bands of the time, so it's all cardboard-boxy, with things getting a bit muddy on occasion, no doubt the kiss of death for a modern populace with ears keyed to even the skinniest band spitting up something that's been run through ProTools or some equivalent. The band itself sounds like it's peopled with folks no more than a few months out from first picking up their instruments, thrashing 'n' howling one second, then plodding 'n' plunking the next. Yeah, I know, I know, I'm not exactly selling this bad boy, right? Well, here's the thing: what makes this worthwhile is that it manages

to capture the creative process of a band unhindered by commercial expectations, the rules of how to properly make music on an instrument and the "correct" way to write a song. This utter freedom is so fuckin' hard to come by these days, when even so-called anarchist bands are so busy trying to conform to some preapproved pigeonhole that they end up sounding like one big faceless blob of mediocrity. Is it "good" listening? Well, that's easily up for debate. It is a poignant reminder of what's too often lost in punk's progression from revolt against mediocrity to coveted career trajectory—you can't truly be free if you care even the slightest if someone else will approve. —Jimmy Alvarado (S.S.)

#### FRENCH EXIT: *Guts & Black Stuff: CD*

I have a tenuous relationship with backup gang vocals. On one hand, it can undermine the tone of a song and cause it to slip into outright silliness. On the other hand, it can really solidify a chorus and make something instantly catchy. French Exit somehow maintains the latter, like a trapeze artist, on their upbeat anthems; lesser bands would warrant major eye rolls. The rest of the songs are taut dramas, especially "When There's a Fork in the Road, Take It" and "Bridges," with tempo changes and Weezer-lite balladry. The production is slick which highlights every bent note, bass line, and tom fill. I would be lying if I said that these songs aren't infectious—they snuggle up in the back of your head, like the adorable Maine Coon pictured on the



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cover. For fans of '90s guitar chugs and confident pop hooks. Recommended.  
—Sean Arenas (It's Alive)

#### FUTURE BINDS: Self-titled: 7" EP

I've said it before, but I seriously wanna know how Deranged stumbles upon all these great bands. Yet another winner of an EP here 'em, featuring a band well versed in Negative Approach-styled hardcore, who keep things tighter than hell, frantic yet coherent, zippy without getting ridiculous. Mind appropriately blown, room appropriately damaged.  
—Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

#### GALACTIC CANNIBAL:

##### *We're Fucked*: LP

One of those strange amalgams that succeed flawlessly: dense, riff-heavy, melodic, and *mercilessly* catchy punk fronted by a veritable sasquatch of a monster on vocals. In lesser hands it's a combination that wouldn't work, but this record just decimates. Vocalist Peter Woods (a Milwaukee noise artist, and brother of Direct Hit's Nick Woods, who plays bass on this record) bellows some of the most bleak, brutal, and poisonous lyrics I've read in years, and there's a certain joy in that catharsis, you know? Buoyed by the melodies and velocity of the songs, this is kind of what I wished Off With Their Heads had sounded like the first time I'd heard them. Anyway, *We're Fucked* is a stunning, ferocious batch of songs that I've listened to dozens of times in the short amount I've had it, and I can't recommend it enough. May actually be

the record of the year for me. Variants of the word "fuck" are used no less than forty-six times on this album.  
—Keith Rosson (Lost Cat)

#### GENTLEMEN PREFER BLOOD / HANDS LIKE BRICKS: Split: 7"

Radius Records, the folks who put out The Smoking Popes' *Inoculator* back in 1991, has risen from a twenty-year nap, moved from Chicago to San Diego, and released a mighty fine split featuring two contemporary L.A. punk groups. It's hard not to be pulled in by the beauty of Paul Aguilera's cigarette-smoking devil kitty paintings, the art that adorns each side of the sleeve, though the irreverence of the painting doesn't fully capture the depth of each group's contribution. To that point, Gentlemen Prefer Blood are one of those groups that has cracked the code and crafted a melodically catchy and lyrically engaging sound in the pop punk genre, a genre which I love, but which I think offers a challenge for being inventive within. They carry the pop in their songwriting sensibility, and the punk in the look-life-in-the-eyes effect. On "Rochester," my favorite of their two tracks, Todd Smailes sings of "keeping guarded in the underground/saving smarts for the showdown" in a gravelly tone set over inviting palm mutes, and in seconds, your ears are met with a rise of vocal harmonies that somehow make the song arrive both emotionally and sonically, a rare accomplishment in just over two minutes. Hands Like Bricks, maybe the more straight-forward rockers of

the two, stands as catchy, singable, moshable, and drinkable. And are we talking 7-Eleven fountain drinks—yes?—then, yes, even refillable! Songs like "The Old Crowd" and "Sunday Stuff" work for me, but I'm not sure if they really show the band's dynamic and range as well as their last EP *II* does. I recommend this split for all the tracks, particularly Gentlemen Prefer Blood's, but afterward, consider checking out Hands Like Bricks' *II* as well. —Jim Joyce (Radius, radiusrecs.com)

#### GHOSTS RUN WILD:

##### *Black Sails on a Sea of Blood*: CD

This one-man band plays grumbling, synth-heavy garage rock to accompany the moment when your face peels off and your skull escapes and grows arms and starts shooting everything up with a laser gun. —MP Johnson (Goblinhaus)

#### GINO AND THE GOONS: "Trouble": 7" and "Oh Yeah!": 7"

And then repeat it! Proving their 12" EP wasn't a fluke, the Goons continue their brilliant Budget Rock-style assault on the ears and soul of the world. Gino is apparently a big boy now and has been taking the show on the road. Total Punk keeps scoring with the hits! Their Rip Off Records aesthetic fits every release perfectly. The liners describe the Goons perfectly, "fast and loose—loose and loud." The Pelican Pow Wow record is just as powerful; no sassy liner notes but the cover does have some sassy ladies showing their stuff. This band is so stupid and simple

and perfect, yet I can't do it. Argh! —Sal Lucci (Total Punk / Pelican Pow Wow, pelicanpowwow@gmail.com)

#### GRINGOS: *Pearly Gates*: LP

This is how you summon Satan. "Conception of the Jackal in 6/8 time." Satan wants you to give him your all. Satan wants you to get weird. He has no special affinity for black metal or death metal, but if you want to knead a sprinkling of those genres into a dough that you concoct from grumbling grooves and slobbering fastcore, he's not going to kick you out of bed. But you've got to do it right. You've got to do it like you mean it, with psychotic horned animal masks. You've got to take your shirt off and show your hairy chest so the devil can see what kind of man you are. Satan approves of Gringos. —MP Johnson (Wrecked 'Em)

#### HDO: *Lost in Translation*: CD

Some of these dudes are/were in Leatherface, but this stands on its own two feet. First new release from this band in over twenty-three years. Very melodic, very riff-oriented, very good punk rock here. "Room with a View" and "Wake Up Call" are a couple of my favorites here. I'm glad this came my way. I'll be digging into the back catalog and keeping my eyes peeled for a U.S. tour in 2014.  
—Sean Koenick (Boss Tuneage)

#### HEALTH PROBLEMS:

##### *A Glut of Plastic*: Cassette

It took two of four songs for me to realize that there is no guitar on this

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album. I didn't miss it. As a guitar player, I didn't even take it personally. We've had our share of spotlight. Besides, the superior musicianship, riffage, and controlled chaos created by David Dempsey on drums and Dan Shaw on bass is enough to please the ears and keep the brain alert. Vocalist Ian Kurtis Crist does a mix of hardcore vocals and spoken word with thoughtful lyrics. He's got a real presence that is working overtime to keep up with the band, but succeeding nonetheless. —John Mule (Self-released)

**HELLGASM: *Infernal Raids*  
*Hellnautic Torment*: Cassette**

With a name like Hellgasm, I knew I was taking a risk on this satanic pastiche tape. At first, I didn't know what to make of it. It nearly sounded tongue-in-cheek in a Spazz sort of way. Then, after mulling it over, I concluded that Hellgasm is serious. Suddenly, the tape became an anomaly in my collection. Almost the *Troll 2* or *Plan 9* from *Outer Space* of powerviolence, crust music. It's bona fide Ed Wood demon worship. My car is officially possessed. —Sean Arenas (Self-released)

**HYSTERIA WARD: *From Breakfast to Madness*: LP**

This is the vinyl re-release of a cassette that was originally released in London, circa 1987. Hysteria Ward plays synth, female-fronted goth punk. Pretty slow, pretty sad sounding, but played with conviction. The singer's voice is so strong, she might as well be boarding up

my windows, forbidding the California sun from entering. Dreary, haunting stuff. The release includes a CD-R with some extra tracks and the liner notes include a history of the band. My favorite anecdote from it is in 1983 when they were looking for their first drummer they placed in ad in *Melody Maker* that said, "Drummer wanted. Must be into The Cure, Wire, and Associates." That's a good start for describing their sound, but Hysteria Ward is much, much punker. —Daryl (General Speech)

**INTERRUPTERS, THE: *"Family" b/w "This Is the New Sound": 7"***

Sturdy and reliable whatever-millionth-wave ska stuff. Aimee Interrupter's got a nicely careworn, scratchy voice and the band themselves—made up of the three Bivona brothers, the same guys who were Tim Armstrong's backing band during his year-long Tim Timebomb project—are confident in their musicianship. There's nothing truly jawdropping here, but like I said, they're a consistent and solid enough pair of songs. A-side features Armstrong taking up co-vocalist duties. I'd like to hear a full-length from this band and see how that grows on me because this two-song 7" just doesn't quite have the depth and resonance I'd hoped for. —Keith Rosson (Pirates Press)

**JIFFY MARKER: *Winston*: LP**

Quirky, bouncy, garage jams that lie somewhere between MOTO and Mean Jeans. There's also a very real budget rock vibe going on. Silk-screened

covers, hand-drawn labels. Cramming all the songs onto one side of the LP. Which makes me think that there's some real thought going on beneath all these hair-brained, pop songs. Evidently, making it all the better. For fans of skateboarding dogs, beer-fuelled pogoing, DeLoreans, and power pop! —Daryl (Self-released)

**JIMMY SINN: *Another Punk Monday Night*: CD**

Wasn't really blown away by the last release I heard on this label, and when I found out it was just gonna be one guy and a guitar singing songs with titles like "Heroin in Hollywood," I was pretty much ready to route the disc to my local used prerecorded music emporium and construct the review via randomly-chosen pieces of magnetic poetry. Catholic guilt forced me to listen to at least the first few songs, however, whereupon—curiously—I found I quite enjoyed the bountiful one-man acoustic/electric lamenting that this disc had to offer. At its best, it sounds like an unlikely and well-produced slush of Billie Joe Armstrong, the Exploding Hearts, and "Me and Julio Down by the School Yard." At its worst, it also sounds like that. I listened to this disc twice now, and that's two times more than my original plan. *Tasty victory to you, Mr. Sinn!* BEST SONG: "Don'cha Get It." WORST SONG TITLE: "Boston Song." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This gentleman appears to have a ukulele on his wall! —Rev. Nørb (1332, 1332records.com)

**KATA SARKA / BODDICKER: *Split: 7"***

Kata Sarka play very death metal-influenced black metal with production that is actually really good. This is fucking...brutal. That's what metal guys say, right? I mean, this is metal in the way that you kind of don't know what's going on half the time. I don't have much of an idea for band comparisons because I don't really keep up with the black metal scene, but I like what I'm hearing and this is a far cry from the blown-out, fuzzy sounds of the stuff I know, like Burzum or Darkthrone. Boddicker are from Detroit and do a more technical type grind thing that reminds me of older Converge taking a lot of influence from Unholy Grave. This is actually a really solid split and one in a recent series of total wins from Profane Existence (Rang, Sick/Tired) that are putting them back on the map as a serious label. —Ian Wise (Profane Existence)

**KETAMINES, THE: *So Hot! 7"***

Two songs flailing in spooky sci-fi sounds, echo surf tones, keyboards, jerkin' back and forth Devo, Zappa vocals, Pere Ubu territory followed by a quick jangle pop number. Three tracks that I have a hard time fathoming. If Hozac weird (not the noisy style, just the quirky side) is your bag, grab this or its coinciding Ketamines singles series brethren (this is three of four). —Matt Seward (Hosehead)

**KETAMINES, THE: *You Can't Serve Two Masters*: LP**

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and multiple vocalists, it's got a very free-form feel. There's a particularly earnest song on the B side where the singer sings about his mother. Makes me wish there was a lyric sheet. But, for the most part, this record has a sunny, afternoon-at-a-cartoon-park type vibe. Visualize it. —Daryl (Southpaw / Mammoth Cave Recording Co.)

#### LAST, THE: *Danger: CD*

I've been banging my head against various tree stumps for about a week, trying to figure out a succinct way to critique this release. Normally, this ain't a problem, but The Last are a bit different from the typical fodder that comes through Razorcake's record bins. Those who have been keeping score on the band are likely hip to the fact that they are one of the "O.G. Three" Hermosa Beach punk bands, predating the other two, Black Flag and the Descendents, by a spell. Their 1978 "She Don't Know Why I'm Here" single is about as choice a melding of early punk and '60s psychedelic rock as yer gonna find, and their 1979 debut LP, *L.A. Explosion*, showcased 'em cleaning the sound a bit to unleash a seminal piece of twelve-string psychtwang that predated the whole "paisley underground" explosion by a few years. Sure, some of us became so enamored with hardcore that we kinda lost touch with The Last for a good while there, and the fact that it's been nigh on seventeen years since their last LP makes no diff to the fact that some of us are fuggin' lazy bastards, no matter how much we

dig a particular group. That said, this is a decidedly different beast from those early records, in that where their debut swung way over into one corner of their influences, this bad boy pendulums waaaay over in the other. Yeah, you can still hear the organs 'n' twelve-strings in there, but the latter is blaring through a distortion pedal loud enough to temper the former. The results sound like "classic" Last mooshed in with, yes, early Black Flag and the Descendents, which is probably no surprise seeing as the Nolte brothers have seen fit to draft the Descendents' 900 lb. beast of a rhythm section (namely Karl and Bill) to round out this latest lineup, not to mention recording, mixing, and mastering it at the Blasting Room. The Pettibon cover art is also a nice touch. All of this gives the whole endeavor an aggressiveness and loudness that interweaves, tempers, counters, and augments those legendary multi-part harmonies and post-Strawberry Alarm Clock bits that made The Last so swell. Ah, but though it's peachy to have a new release by 'em, and all that, this is all ultimately just me blathering and self-bickering. I'm running outta stumps to butt and I need to take a position, so here it is: This bad boy is FAN-FUCKING-TASTIC. —Jimmy Alvarado (End Sounds)

#### LEGENDARY WINGS: *Questions: 7"*

Punchy, catchy, toe-tapping and head-bobbing power pop with bright, open chords and clean, crisp vocals. The band is exceptionally tight and what they're

laying down here is heaps of fun, along the lines of a corn-fed, Midwestern version of Royal Headache. Two tunes on 45 with the big hole in the middle. This appetizer's got me craving more. —Jeff Proctor (Tic Tac Totally)

#### LEGIONAIRE'S DISEASE BAND:

##### *Rather See You Dead: 7"*

Another much-ballyhooped punk single is pulled from obscurity, dusted off, and reissued for the teeming masses. In this case, though, I dunno if "obscure" quite fits, seeing as the title track has been comped, bootied, and otherwise available in different forms for decades now. Ah, no matter, as this time 'round yer getting it, along with its flip, "Downtown," in its original and much preferred form. If ye ain't been privy to hearing it prior, yer getting for your buck two sludgy sides of primal, prime-grade sloppy punk that gets under yer skin like scabies and just won't leave you be. File it next to your copy of the Fuck Ups' *FU 82* EP and watch your shelves start to rot. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cheap Rewards, cheaprewards.net)

#### LESS THAN JAKE: *See the Light: CD/LP*


As I get closer to having spent fifty years on this planet, I acknowledge a growing grumpiness and curmudgeonly attitude to life within myself. No longer is it all puppy dogs and kittens. If asked, my favorite color is black. Therefore, I'm perplexed that I find the new Less Than Jake album an enjoyable listen, as after all, it's a band I'd long lost interest in, really. However, with a more ska- and horns-orientated approach being

employed than on many of the recent efforts, this album finds me adding a hint of brightness to accompany the black. This isn't going to change the world but it is easy to listen to and, more so, if you are a fan of the earlier material—it does a good job of alleviating some of the daily grind without raising the blood pressure to near critical levels—and turns out to be the soundtrack to a partial smile. —Rich Cocksedge (Fat)

#### LIBYANS: *Expired Language: LP*


Libyans don't strike me as an incidental band. Every detail reads as intentional and serving a multi-faceted whole. On the cover is a beautiful black and white photo of a jellyfish taken by bassist Aaron Demuth. Jellyfish are odd creatures. They don't have bones, a brain, or a heart. They have an orifice that functions as both mouth and anus. Transparent earth aliens. I'm not a musician and, musically, I have no idea how Libyans are playing their instruments, but they sound like thrashing-around tentacles with electric barbs at the end. On headphones, it's downright freaky. It's almost like a medusa attacking in there. Throughout it all, Liz Panella's voice conveys all-too-human distortion, urgency, and anxiety. The overall effect of *Expired Language* is like being tossed into a tank full of jellyfish. They don't care about you. They can't. It's not in their nature. They'll sting you as so much touch you. That's just what they do. It's more than just an album, it's an experience. —Todd Taylor (Sorry State)

## AS YOU WERE



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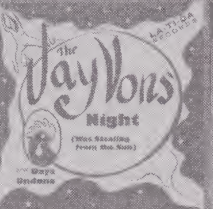

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## LIKE LIKE LIKE THE THE DEATH:

### Cave Jenny: LP

Milwaukee's got some awesome shit brewin' in their punk scene. Like Like Like The The Death (LLTTD) brings about this post/noise rock pop punk band. And it's damn good. I've been really digging a local Bay Area band Cold Circuits and it's stylistically very similar. LLTTD is a bit more contained, a bit less raw, but that doesn't mean it doesn't equally rip. The out-of-tune vocals and anxious post-punk guitar plucking and strumming leaves you a bit off kilter but wanting more. A definite *hell yes*. —Camille Reynolds (Latest Flame)

### LOST KIDS:

#### "Cola Freaks" b/w "Alle Taler": 7"

Awesome reissue of a Danish punk single from 1978. Driving punk with female/male vocal tradeoffs and snot harmonies. Three short blasts complete with acceptable guitar solos and no clunkers. Fans of the era won't be disappointed. *Warning:* those Danish have a different word for everything. —Billups Allen (Sing Sing)

### LOVESORES, THE: *Formaldehyde*: 7"

You know those times—everyone has them—when you just can't get into new music? I hit a spell of that this summer-into-Fall. Just nothing doing anything for me. This ended the day I received a package of Lovesores records in the mail, ended with a hard slap in the mouth for my piss-poor attitude. The Lovesores are the current outfit

of Scott "Deluxe" Drake. The man is rock'n'roll royalty in my house. Drake's curriculum vitae is long and storied, his most notable outfit being The Humpers of course (let's line up the rest of 'em: Vice Principals, World's Strongest Men, Suicide Kings, Fabulous Prizes [did they ever put out any wax before morphing into The Vice Principals?]) If anyone at Razorcake HQ knows, get in touch! Designated Dale, I'm looking at you...). The Humpers have been one of my favorite bands for almost twenty years. That is scary to think about as I write it, but it's true. Anyway, *Formaldehyde* is The Lovesores current release, but I gotta heap praise on the whole of their output. I hadn't heard a Scott Drake release since 2009's *Beneath the Bloodshot Lights* EP. I've been eagerly waiting for his next record to drop, but through my own ignorance I nearly missed The Lovesores 10" from earlier this year and the two-song 7" from early 2012. Lovesores are very Humpers-esque, possibly closer than any of Drake's other bands. It helps that Humpers alum Jeff Fieldhouse slings axe and co-writes (although I hear he is not in the current live lineup). Present is that swagger, that snarling vocal delivery. Imagine Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers on uppers instead of downers. Lovesores have a big sound, with scorch your pee-pee axe work (give you a dollar if you can find where I stole that gem from) but there's enough shit and dirt still left in the mix to keep it real. I feel like I'm slighting the rest of the band, though! I gotta find out what

other bands they've been in because, yeah, they're kicking my ass right now. —Sal Lucci (Hovercraft)



### MANUAL SCAN: *All Night Scan*: LP

Always thought the mods were twats back in the day; sure, punk might not have been the open-ended coalition of free-thinking individualists we all said it was, but at least punk kinda rewarded novel (i.e., goofy) solutions to shit, whereas mod was more like some ready-made fashion craze for U.S. proto-alterna-teens and/or something more like a classic car club than a vital subcultural hoop-de-do. That said, I have no idea how this band (est. San Diego, 1981) completely flew under my radar for thirty-two years; I completely do not remember ever even hearing their name, ever, before this album dropped out of some Lichtensteinian aircraft into my lap. Shame, really—the band is pretty dang good and the recordings sound great, especially given how pancake-y records sounded back in the first half of the '80s. It's really hard to believe Bomp didn't wind up marketing these guys as an American Barracudas (roll that around in your mind for a while)), or Slash didn't give them a tumble when they were churning out those Rank & File and Dream Syndicate albums, or Restless didn't dump their records at all the college stations in 1987 or whatever. Go figure. The band definitely has that '60s-filtered-thru-the-'80s sound ((see also; The Last, The Barracudas, The Fleshtones, The Unknowns, and all like that)) and cover the Pretty

Things, so twats, I venture, they ain't. **BEST SONG:** I'm gonna say "New Difference" but I bet most of you ham and eggars will say "Plan of Action." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "She Said It's Late." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Peter Beckett, who played guitar for the Thoughts, who were the band who originally released the Ray Davies-penned song "All Night Stand," covered here, moved to California and scored one of the more annoying #1 hits in America with the band Player, whose song "Baby Come Back" topped the charts in 1978. I'd imagine the casual reader didn't quite expect the Player/Manual Scan connection to be declared so abruptly. —Rev. Nørb (Cheap Rewards, cheaprewards.net)

### MATT K. SHRUGG: *We Were D.O.A.*: 7"

Solo effort from Sacramento area rock and roll personality Matt K. Shrug (he of the bands Th'Losin Streaks, the Pizzas, and plenty of others) who wrote, recorded, and played all four tunes on this here slab o' wax all by his lonesome. He does it quite well. Peppy, poppy garage-informed punk rock with multiple layers to peel back, there's a lot to take in on these four tunes, each a little different from the last. The commonalities are the smooth, effortless vocals, expert level jamming, and full, rich sounds he squeezes out of the lo-fi production. This sounds like he is having tons of fun and like it would be tons of fun to watch live with a full band. —Jeff Proctor (Tic Tac Totally)


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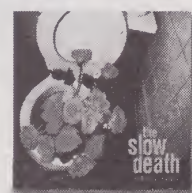
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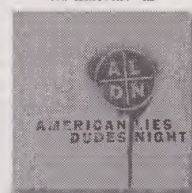
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#### MIND SPIDERS: *Inhumanistic*: LP

Part solitary scientist/astronaut, part alien, The Mind Spiders are at it again, deep in space, further into your brain. Part of the equation is "scientist trapped in an airless, antiseptic capsule." A reflection bounces off of concentrating eyes behind glasses: oscilloscopes, charts, and endless danger equations. Loneliness. Exile in the search for meaning. The ultimate, dark "outside"-slash-outsider staring into the distorting, reflective maw of another freeze-dried dinner; completely, totally serrated from meaningful human contact. Under his microscope and displayed by a light projector on the interior wall of his space station are multi-legged critters, small as individual music notes. Spiders of sound. They thrive in voids, they eat the inedible. They make noise. They are legion, nearly invisible, ubiquitous, existing where nothing has a right to live. Harvested in Mark Ryan's net of science and art, examined, he manipulates them into both beautiful and haunting orchestrations. Unearthly. *Inhumanistic*. Hail the void. —Todd Taylor (Dirtnap)

#### MODERN HUT: *Generic Treasure*: LP

Everyone knows That Guy. He's the dude at the party who knows a few chords and is quick enough on his feet to write clever little ditties on the spot. The frustrating thing about him is that the jokes present in That Guy Songs could be way better with a bit of refinement, but in That Guy's head charm and wit trump practice and songwriting, and he inevitably winds up a frustrated insurance salesman a

few years down the road. Despite the "lonely weird dude with a guitar" aura that emanates from this record from the get-go, Modern Hut manages to dodge all of the common That Guy symptoms. These songs don't rely on easy rhymes or turns—there's craft here, as the singer tells tales of organs snipped from bodies in his lonely voice, usually with just a guitar as accompaniment (though Marissa from Screaming Females lends her unmistakable vocals to one of these). What could have been just another dweeb driving people from the kitchen of a house party turns out to be one of the best records I got for review this month. —Michael T. Fournier (Don Giovanni)

#### MOVING FINGER: *Self-titled*: 7" EP

Moving Finger's debut EP is what you'd might expect from Goner. This 7" is pure stoney-psych-rock'n'roll goodness draped with echoey vocals and plenty of reverb with songs "Smokin' the Crack of Dawn" and "Tres Dolares." "P.O.W./ M.I.A." is a strange and catchy punk-as-shit song, keeping it short and sweet. Always leave them wanting more right? What's not to like? —Camillye Reynolds (Goner)

#### MOXIE BEAT: *Self-titled*: 12" EP

This is a gorgeous picture disk 12" proudly displayed in a clear vinyl sleeve. Both sides feature artwork by guitarist Fritz Aragon. The playing side depicts a young girl opening her bisected head, like a Russian nesting doll, revealing a dark spiral behind her face. The backside

is adorned with a speckled toppling cathedral. Tonally, Moxie Beat delivers the same sort of brooding introspection as both images. The band is reminiscent of members' previous projects like Rogue State, Dogs Of Ire, and Restrained. It's hardcore with a dramatic edge. With dueling bassists and fractured—but melodic—riffs, Moxie Beat pummels through four songs without ever plummeting into an aural mess. The rhythm section sputters and spurts with technical flair never satisfied with simply sprinting to the finish line. Instead, each song is hulking and anguished, lingering on each abrasive facet. The whole package (the songs, the large foldout poster, the artwork) fits together nicely—a testament to the elbow grease involved in DIY punk. A must-have from one of SoCal's finest—and loudest. —Sean Arenas (Ethospine / Vitriol)

#### NAH: *Difficult*: LP

Nah is a one-man band featuring drums run through effects and layered with washes of noise. The A-side focuses more on the drums and has a driving, kraut rock feel, while the B-side is more about the noise, with intermittent drums. The whole thing has an air of excitement and drive. If you told me I'd have this much fun listening to an album where the main instrument is distorted drums, I'd be shocked. —Chris Terry (ranchjams.blogspot.com)

#### NERVOSAS: *Self-titled*: 2 x LP

Wipers-by-way-of-Estranged darkened punk. When the male/female vocals

wail simultaneously, it's pure magic. And the songs on their own blister and sulk in some of the best shadows of punk's torrid bleakness. But getting a three-sided double LP that plays at 45 is kind of a bummer. And while it doesn't feel right to dwell on that, these are some *desperate* songs, and I really wanna believe in it. Records are a luxury; let's not get too decadent. —Daryl (Let's Pretend)

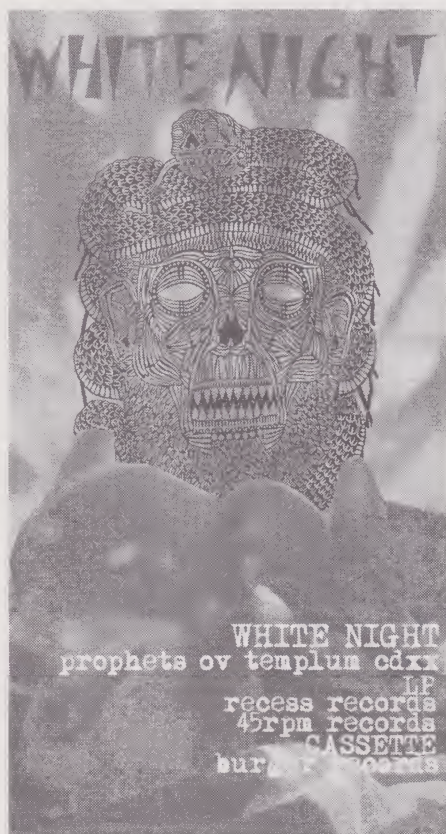
#### NEW SOUND OF NUMBERS, THE:

##### *Invisible Magnetic*: LP

These kids take their cues from post-punk's groovier wing, with nods to bands like Kleenex and Delta 5 mixed with tribal rhythms, hints of funk, minimalist pop, drone, and so on delivered via some interesting instrumentation—they could totally be synth-generated, but I'm hearing prodigious use of a melodia, violins, clarinets, and a host of other instruments one usually doesn't come across in a good way in rock-oriented music. The tunes themselves are engaging, creative and, in the case of "Complete," quite the effective earworm. Nice to hear a band working outside the usual boxes with great results. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cloud Recordings)

#### NIGHTMARE BOYZZZ: *Bad Patterns*: LP

There are several modes to Muscle Shoals, Alabama's Nightmare Boyzzz, all of them enjoyable. The mellow burners sound akin to the sunshine-pop of Thee Makeout Party and Audacity, if those dudes were bikers (like stylish,



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mechanic-smart Rat Fink bikers; not kill-you, nasty-drug-habit, stab-you bikers). The faster songs are reminiscent of *Love Songs for the Retarded*-era Queers. (A record I have a soft spot for.) Think Beach Boys for deviants with bad tattoos, unafraid of dirty public bathroom sex. In song. So fuckin' catchy. With repeated listens, there are microbes on the cutting board at this picnic—Big Star, T Rex, and Rise Up Howlin' Werewolf are all minced and conditioned on top of a hot dog. The catsup even spells "fuck yeah!" —Todd Taylor (Slovenly)

#### NO//SÉ: *Beach Bathroom Bingo: 7"*

Ripping new single from this Ventura band! Taking back the California sound from the Swedes who've been routinely showing us up the last decade. A little T.S.O.L., a little Bronx, a little Wipers, a lot of fucking attitude, and dripping with a grim individuality. Two mid-tempo stompers, driven hard by all down-strummed guitars and solid, thick-sounding drums. Filed right alongside No Problem and Night Birds (and incidentally, the letter "n") in the "there's still hope for punk" category. My Technics will be getting to know this record intimately. —Chad Williams (1859 / Different Kitchen)

#### NOBUNNY: *Secret Songs: LP*

As of late, there's been a saturation of pop rock nostalgia and garage punk that's been heralded by the likes of King Tuff, Ty Segall, and FIDLAR. Nobunny, although often lumped in with the unwashed denim jacket masses, should

not be overlooked as he is able to adeptly own every borrowed sound. Since *Love Visions*, Nobunny (the alter ego of Justin Champlin) has been self-assured with a flair for theatrics through *Rocky Horror Picture Show*-esque sexuality and Andy Kaufman pranksterism. *Secret Songs* is no exception. Every new tune reinvents and dials into the sounds of the Ramones, the Kinks, classic rock'n'roll, and obscure '50s pop groups. Nobunny's reverence grants his songs a memorable and timeless quality, yet Champlin also imbues them with raw urgency, tongue-in-cheek perversion, and various forms of playful depravity—the sort of stuff Buddy Holly never sang about. The production is pleasantly grainy and in no way sounds like cover-up for shoddy musicianship. After you pick up the record, go see 'em live and get all sorts of weird. —Sean Arenas (Goner)

#### NOTS: *Self-titled: 7"*

Three songs of atonal, sloppily performed garage punk in the reckless spirit of riot grrrl. The Coat Hangers do it much, much better. —Juan Espinosa (Goner)

#### PIGS: *Gaffe: 10"*

Unh. Hell yes. Exactly the filthy, off-kilter, pissed-off result I was expecting from Dave Unsane and producer Andrew Schneider (Cave In, Converge, etc.). Certainly in the Unsane world, with more quirky Melvins-esque swagger and a seriously mesmerizing rhythm section. Often reminiscent of Tomahawk's first record, as well. Heavy, just weird enough, and

way dirty. Rad. —Dave Williams (Coextinction/Solar Flare)

#### PINK NOISE, THE: *Greedy Heart: LP*

I see what these guys are going for, some kind of post-whatever new wave art rock, but it's not happening for me. Wandering drums and atonal guitars drown in psychedelic effects while a vocalist with a grudge against the natural cadence of human speech sort of talks indifferently about arty things. Occasionally, there's some mildly engaging synth weirdness. I get the feeling that this is supposed to offend my pop sensibilities, but I'm left feeling as bored as this guy sounds. There must be people who live and die by this kind of music, but I don't see the point. —Indiana Laub (Skrot Up, skrotup@yahoo.com, skrotup.com)

#### PINKERTON THUGS, THE: *The Pain and the... LP*

The Pinkerton Thugs have been making thinking-man's street punk for almost twenty years now. Their music isn't flashy. Their album art isn't flashy. Hell, nothing they do is particularly flashy, which is only a problem because it may be why I haven't really taken the time to listen to them until now. Then again, it's their lack of flash that makes them what they are. It's their roll-the-sleeves up and just fucking rock approach that makes them worth listening to, and if it takes a bit too long for some nerds like me to catch on, then so be it. They'll keep doing their thing, and if you don't listen, then it's your loss. —MP Johnson (Jailhouse)

#### PITY PARTY:

##### *Fine Young Animals: 12" EP*

One tamale and beans/rice slapped in the microwave. Halfway through the small plate of food and the first side of the LP is finished. My mouth hole is coated in porky masa deliciousness and my ear holes are smiling wide from the punk rock goodness that just flew from the speakers. In my mind I've imagined Fid mid-leap, Cassady belting it out, Joel plonking away at the bass (it has a fantastic distinguishable sound in the mix), and Mikey sweating out the frantic beat. Flip the record, finish the tamale lunch, same results. Punk pop from the heart from pure pedigree players (Measure [SA], Sexy Crimes, The Eggs). They'll give you one of the best twenty-five minute sets, drink all the beer, sleep on your couch, and watch the Simpsons until dawn. *Quiero mas y quieres mas tambien*. —Matt Seward (Psychic Volt)

#### PRODUKT: *Uzaleznieni: LP*

This is some pretty cool and dark Polish punk coming on a lot like a mix of His Hero Is Gone and early Bad Religion. There are traces of post punk and maybe goth in places, but this is mostly in the hardcore punk realm. Really nice package with full-color insert and high quality recording and mastering. Fans of international dark punk will want to be all over this band. —Mike Frame (Trujaca Fala)

#### RADIOACTIVITY: *Self-titled: LP*

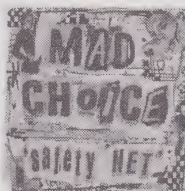
The Marked Men blew me away one fateful night when I decided to catch



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them at the Smell in downtown L.A., going on nothing but a hunch and some encouraging record/live show reviews. Soon thereafter I came upon the Potential Johns blaring through *Razorcake* HQ's speakers, resulting in me desperately seeking their split with the Chinese Telephones like my name was Susan. *Ghosts* dropped and I was in heaven: that was until Marked Men went on an "important shows only" hiatus. You can't keep a band of amazing musicians down for long and that's why the Mind Spiders and Low Culture came to fruition. Not even a month after the third Mind Spiders album comes out and I'm already hearing from family and good friends alike: "Dude, have you streamed that Radioactivity album yet?" Modern technology has a long history of betraying my expectations. I did not stream the album and decided to gamble on either finding myself pleasantly surprised or painfully disappointed. I ordered the album blindly. After all, I've since bought any and all Marked Men-related material and have yet to be let down. Soon after the needle dropped on Radioactivity's new album a smile came upon my face. The kind of smile that only appears when you find out that special girl/boy doesn't think you're a complete loser and accepts your date invitation. Or the joy you feel of complete record nerd satisfaction knowing that you are one of only two hundred lucky ducks who now own a copy on yellow vinyl. The first time I heard *Singles Going Steady*

by the Buzzcocks I was convinced it was the holy grail of pop punk albums. That was until I realized it wasn't just a clever title but not an album at all. I'm sure a lot of bands struggle with choosing the perfect song to lead off a full length but how difficult must it have been for Radioactivity, being that every single song could lead off this masterpiece of an album. It's been a while since I could honestly say that an album is absolutely flawless. I'm proud to announce that this album sets forth a new standard of quality in the pop punk genre which will surely be a tough act to follow once this album's legacy is settled. Highest possible recommendation unless you hate good music. —Juan Espinosa (Dirtnap)

#### RADIOACTIVITY: Self-titled: 7" EP

When I was a kid growing up in the '70s, I loved action movies and television because they made me feel, by proxy, superhuman by just watching them. They filled me with a feeling of invincibility and raw, ragged potential; overwhelming odds overcome, opponents bested, scars left. Radioactivity's songs make me feel that way as a stupid adult addicted to vinyl records. There's just so much instantaneously emanating from these songs. Not only is there blasting punk jet-engine thrust, but x-ray subatomic particles colliding and syringes injecting. Head almost explodes from sheer joy. DNA gets scrambled. The entire room glows with a weird, catchy, green throbbing power coming off a

mere circling black disc. Just so it's on record—projects that involve Jeff Burke and/or Mark Ryan—Marked Men, Mind Spiders, Potential Johns—just buy them. It's a quality of life issue. —Todd Taylor (Alien Snatch)

#### RATBITE / RATBITE:

##### Two Teeth / Ratbite It, You Scum: CD

So this one's got a really interesting story behind it: there are two bands on opposite sides of the world with the same name playing similar styles. They found each other and decided to release their music together. One hails from the U.S. The other hails from the Ukraine. Why the hell not, right? This is a pretty good split. Both sides feel like '90s punk with a healthy mix of thrash. Think NOFX with a pinch of Municipal Waste sprinkled in. The American Ratbite is a little less traditional with songs being a little more complex than the Ratbite from Ukraine. I liked the vocals better on the Ukraine side; they were screamed more than U.S. Ratbite, giving it some more power. Both Ratbites are great, each putting their own spin on punk and creating a mass of bleeding, festering ratbites for your ears. —James Meier (Suburban, suburbanwhitetrashrecords.com)

#### RATCHETS, THE: "Hoist a New Flag" b/w "The Way Things Are": 7"

Ratchets fans are still waiting for a true comeback, but until then, this surprising 7" of two unreleased songs recorded seven years ago is a big time treat. Reminiscent of Reducers SF,

this band gained quick notoriety with their unmistakable, extremely catchy middle tempo streetpunk. I'm not sure why it took so long for these instantly lovable tunes to get released, but kudos to Pirates Press for putting them out. As is always the case with the label, the record looks amazing, too, pressed on beautiful marbled vinyl. The Ratchets really need to return with a new album. It's time for a ratcheting up for the Ratchets! —Art Ettinger (Pirates Press)

#### REALITY RETURNS: Self-titled: 7"

If hardcore bands were math equations, Reality Returns would be like the Pythagorean Theorem. They're a relatively straightforward formula of heavy mid-tempo riffs, plus crew vocals, plus breakdowns, divided by five members. While I can credit the band for doing their homework, I found this too derivative to give it a passing grade. —Paul J. Comeau (Take It Back, takeitbackrecords@gmail.com)

#### RED DONS:

##### Notes on the Underground: 7"

There are bands that are content to sit within a pigeonhole and there are bands that diligently push against the edges, rebelling against expectations to find a sound all their own. From the quasi-tribal drumming beginning the opening salvo here, "Cold Hearted," Red Dons make it clear they aren't content just fitting in. The tune, at its core a smart bit of minor chord pop, is rife with echoes of time past and present—a bit of post punk here, some

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garage there, drone, and the ubiquitous, insistent thud in the drums—rearranged and repurposed so that all are present but none overwhelms another. The remaining tunes follow along the same lines, each familiar yet retaining its own sound. The whole? A gritty-yet-tasty selection from a band that continues to wow with each successive release. —Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

**RICHIE RAMONE: *Entitled*: CD**

So it's here and although I think Designated Dale should be reviewing this, I will give it the old college try. Richie handles drums and vocals here. Guitar is served up by Tommy Bolan and Jiro Okabe lays down the bass. Two classic Ramones tunes are re-recorded here (one more is LP-only), along with new songs from Richie. "Criminal" blasts off the proceedings here in fine fashion. "Someday Girl" gives off a cool Iggy vibe while "Forgotten Years" is also a really cool tune. Repeated listenings will draw the casual listener in to the fold. Definitely curious to see how this will translate in a live setting. —Sean Koepenick (DC Jam)

**RIFLE DIET: "Abuse Begets Abuse" b/w "The Affected": 7"**

Another release in the Profane Existence Singles Series (the review copy was on black vinyl and I really don't understand why anyone would want thundering crust on anything else), Rifle Diet delivers two great tracks of what you would expect musically from a Minneapolis-stereotyped Profane band

featuring members of In Defence and Garmonbozia. However, Rifle Diet flips it up for us, delivering the ultra-heavy plodding At A Loss-type track as the A-side and saving the thrashing ripper for the B. The raging, distorted lyrics stay topical (cyclical abuse, "the scene"), but are well-written and heartfelt enough to keep you coming back until memorized. As of this review deadline, copies are still available from PE... grab one. —Matt Seward (Profane Existence)

**RVIVR: *The Beauty Between*: LP**

One of the most scrutinized and adored bands in DIY punk. I recently saw them play their fiftieth show on a fifty-five date tour. If that's not putting in the time, what's the point of trying at all? And how was their set? *They destroyed!* You can't deny it. There's a mighty force within this band. And your criticisms are so obviously rooted in your own jealousy that it's making you look like a chump. Jealous of their conviction, talent, and success; I know I've been guilty of all three. They spent a couple years confronting typical show situations that they weren't comfortable with, and for those of us who stuck around, the music rages on. Catchy and melodic, but not without a ragged weirdness to it. My favorite new addition to the RVIVR catalog is definitely the hardcore-esque "Bleed Out" on the B side. But, overall, this is a truly exciting record that shows a band that has put a lot of work into not only finding, but creating, their place. And if you can't hang, it's probably for the best. —Daryl (Rumbletowne)

**SCHONWALD: *Self-titled*: 7"**

It wasn't until the very moment I started listening to this record that I realized how much a band like The Spits has in common with dreamy synth-pop bands from the '80s such as Pet Shop Boys or OMD. Schonwald definitely sound like the latter bands, but I still get the feeling that they are one bad, drug-frenzied night away Spittown... That said, this is mesmerizing, beautiful music with a definite darker overtone. I like it. —Ty Stranglehold (Hozac)

**SEASICK: *ESCHATON*: 12"**

I hadn't heard that Seasick had gone on "indefinite hiatus" and thought the band was just in a dry spell for a few years. Their sort of jammy, sludge-tinged HC always made me a little smitten, but I just assumed that maybe I had lost track of them. When this hit my doorstep, I was legitimately surprised at the progression they had made as a band, and even more surprised (and disappointed) that this recording is three years old and is being released after their break up. The range of influence here is huge, from early East Coast hardcore to the Slap A Ham catalog to Sleep and everything in between. This record will most likely be a slow seller because there is no tour to support it and the label isn't a hype machine, but this will be a record that stands up to time because it shows a band in their prime playing out their influences without catering to an audience. These are songs that get stuck in your head at once and continue to surprise over repeated listens. It's

November and I'm calling this out as the probable record of the year. —Ian Wise (To Live A Lie)

**SHANKS, THE: *Backstabber*: 7"**

Squealing, feedback-drenched guitars and howling, screeching vocals, this is exquisitely intense. The Shanks' songs on this here 7" sound like some long-lost nugget of Northwestern garage punk: Wipers weirdness, dirtier and nastier than Mudhoney, faster and more ferocious than Murder City Devils. This is a ripper. Comes highly recommended. —Jeff Proctor (Tic Tac Totally)

**SICK SICK BIRDS:**

***All the Fins in the Sea*: 7" EP**

It's the details in the craft that make me pause and breathe. All the bits fit artfully, but it doesn't garishly draw attention to itself. *All the Fins in the Sea* sounds handmade, yet celebrating the natural grain of song. Part of the reward is the repeated contemplation, be it punk-made pop songs, sunsets, rural roads, or the ocean ebbing and flowing. It's the opposite of quick edits, manipulated stadium roar, and flash! flash! flash! It's also cool to see how some legacies unfold. The Thumbs left a huge impression on me years ago, but I know better than to gag and bind Mike Hall by his legacy. On this four-songer, Sick Sick Birds play poetic, slow-rolling, shimmering music that gains weight with repeat listens. It's really quite beautiful and poignant at every angle, from the lyrics ("You've got to speed up to keep up with the

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rising cost of flesh and the falling price of tenderness"), to the hand-cut (not die-cut) cardboard stock cover, to the watercolor on the download card. —Todd Taylor (Ghostbot)

#### **SMALLTOWN: Square One: 7" EP**

Wow, been a helluva long time since I last heard these Swedes. Multiple helpings here of popicious punk: mid-tempo, hooky, impassioned. Singer's gruff without being clichéd, melodic without being operatic, while the band keeps things simple but not staid. Buy many, crank loud. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pirates Press)

#### **SNAKE CHARMER: Self-titled: EP**

How much noizecore can you take? I know it's all the rage at the moment, and if you want more, then here you go. I've had more than my fill of the stuff over the years. Next! —M.Avrq (Schizophrenic)

#### **SPARROW FALLS: Maelstrom (Thus Perishes the World's Glory): CDEP**

I was going to call this EP a bag of emo clichés and clumsy male feelings and leave it at that. Like, it's corny but harmless and there's probably a market for this or whatever. Teenagers will be down with this. The musicians are competent. But there's a song on here ("Maelstrom") where the singer belts out a line with that bullshit, overblown vocal style that could almost be the guy from Fall Out Boy (or insert *Alternative Press* band singer), and then he laughs. It's one of the worst things I've ever heard. He laughs in this

knowing, smug way. He's arrogant. I listened to this EP twice through, and I have no idea where his arrogance could possibly come from. You will likely never hear this record, and you will likely never hear about this band ever in your life, and that's maybe the only real justice I can hope for. —Matt Werts (Amsterdam Recording Company, amsterdamrecordingcompany.com)

#### **STALINS OF SOUND: Pool of Piranha: 7"**

Another fine effort from San Diego's extraordinary synth punk trio, and again released on Craig Oliver's (of Christmas Island) very fine Volar Records. First side includes two fast and heavy tunes, loaded with crunchy, smartly played guitar and moody synths. Second track is a gem of a cover, "Panik" by French paleo-punk outfit Métal Urbain with a shredding solo and ray gun synth blasts. The B-side track, "Rapture in Blood," features a much more subdued slice of doom and gloom, droning vocals and instrumentation, and dense and layered keyboard sounds that sounds like it could be a missing track from Digital Leather's *Warm Brother*. Excellent stuff. —Jeff Proctor (Volar)

#### **STEVE IGNORANT WITH PARANOID VISIONS: When...?: CD**

Crass's former lead singer joins up with a long-lived Irish anarcho punk band to deliver some new tuneage with loud guitars and pointed barbs directed at everything from the greater society to modern punk's slide from a vehicle for

revolution into a fashion phase one "goes through." Their attacks regarding the latter are, of course, largely on point, but one can't help but wonder if anybody's really listening, but one can only hope. Tunes are strong, their outrage sincere and yet not overly preachy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Overground)

#### **STEVIE DINNER:**

##### **Mystery Flavor: Cassette**

One of the best parts about reviewing music is that I constantly have to reevaluate my approach to music and my taste overall. For example, I took one look at this tape and figured it was junk. It looks like the self-consciously quirky sort of shit that really gets on my nerves. But it's my job to look beyond the packaging, and I'm glad I did. This is a joyous musical dumpster dive that yields all sorts of treasures. Trashy disco beats. Warped keyboard parts. Throwaway vocals. Rotten banana peel guitar solos. Layers and layers of wonderful musical refuse from one dude's stinky bedroom. —MP Johnson (Muckman, muckmanrecords.bandcamp.com)

#### **SUNNYSIDE: Welcome to San Diego: LP**

Sunnyside play melodic, riffy pop punk straight out of 1998. I guess this is timeless music because nobody has ever stopped playing it. They remind me of that wing of Epitaph/Fat Wreck bands I could never get excited about (No Use For A Name, Strung Out, etc.)—not bad necessarily, but unremarkable. Like barre chord wallpaper. They're gravel-voiced bros who sound like they've done

a little bit of living, and now they're going to tell you about their relationship problems. Great. The lyric booklet is pretty well done, and I appreciated the photo of Tony Gwynn on the cover. So yeah, this record is boring, but check out the cool pic of an MLB Hall of Famer. —Matt Werts (Little Deputy / ADD / It's Alive / Eager Beaver)

#### **SWARM, THE: Parasitic Skies: LP**

Considered a classic of the powerviolence genre and originally released as a 10" back in the late '90s, *Parasitic Skies* gets the reissue treatment in LP form this time around. Penned by dudes with pedigrees that included Left For Dead and Cursed, this album sounds like road construction—and I mean that in the sense of ruination inherent, things being concisely demolished—with a couple of articulate, morose bridge trolls belting it out over the music. Personally, I was a bigger fan of Reversal Of Man and Combat Wounded Veteran (though much of that had to do with their visual aesthetic), but considering how short The Swarm's lifespan was—less than two years—they had a lasting impact on the genre, and I'm sure fans of "hardcore played by belt sanders" are shitting themselves right about now. A nicely done reissue. —Keith Rosson (No Idea)

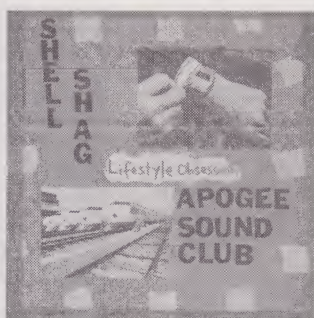
#### **SWEATSHOP BOYS:**

##### **The Great Depression: LP**

Sweatshop Boys are relentlessly miserable and I don't know why I respect that, but I do. They don't want to live, or can't see any reason to go



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on living, and they live in their heads, and they eat dinner and they listen to Spazz and they feel like shit, and they possibly break up the band. I can't think of a more relatable record, subject-wise. They partly do a kind of peppy British pop punk, sometimes in a "whoa-oh" kind of way, which can get tiresome. But they also slow down, and when they do, they become a bleak power pop band, which feels like their real strength. They're capable of something broader and arguably more powerful when they pace themselves. They also add little touches—surfy guitar, organ, backing female harmonies (why aren't Finger and Lady Ganja on every song? why aren't they in the band?)—and those touches make all the difference in the world. —Matt Werts (Rapt / Crapoulet / Kuskus / Drunken Sailor // Dirt Cult)

**TIM TIMEBOMB: "30 Pieces of Silver" b/w "Ooh La La": 7"**

In general, white people trying to do ska and reggae make for a lot of embarrassment, in my humble white ass opinion. There are some exceptions to this rule, the most immediate being the late, great, magical Joe Strummer (may he rest in peace), and former Operation Ivy guitarist, current Rancid co-frontman, Tim Armstrong. His latest project falls under the name Tim Timebomb and represents a wide arrange of musical genres and cover songs, from Cock Sparrer to The Specials to Tom Waits, as well as reinterpretations of songs from his past as country and ska tunes. Here,

Tim performs ska legend Prince Buster's "30 Pieces of Silver" and The Faces' "Ooh La La." I would like these tracks even if I didn't know the originals, but listening to them had resounding effects. After hearing and enjoying them, I went back to listen to the originals, then listened to the Timebomb versions again, then spent some more time listening to more of Tim's latest work. You would have time well spent if you did the same. —John Mule (Hellcat / Pirates Press)

**TUNES, THE: Love Uncool: LP**

I feel lately we are unearthing a lot of shitty eighties music and calling it power pop. I'm a sucker for a haircut and a Rick Springfield lean, but I see a lot of that in dollar bins and, as we all know, buyer beware. However, whoever put this out has taste. It takes an ear to appreciate it, I think. It's more on the lighter side. It doesn't have balls, but it has heart. It's catchy as hell. I put the needle back on "Elevator" a few times before I even got through the whole thing. Awesome vocal harmonies, great choruses, and upbeat themes are prevalent. If you're only into the heavy power-chord power pop and don't dig the poppier stuff, then this isn't for you. But it's high quality for fans of The Shoes, Squeeze, or better Elvis Costello. For a more obscure reference, that Colors' song "Growing up American" and the Trainpotter's "High Rise" also come to mind. I'm keeping it. —Billups Allen (Cheap Rewards, cheaprewards.net)

**TV FREAKS: Two: LP**

I'm liking this a lot better than their other LP, which was pretty good. This one has more fire in its guts, I guess you could say. They pace the album with peaks and valleys to keep you interested and to keep everything from becoming one long blur. You get the ragers like "Overreacting," "Knife," "Battle," "Game," and the rest. Garage punk'n'roll done right. Which is saying something, because a lot of bands of this style are bleh. But TV Freaks rise above the rest. —M.Avrq (Schizophrenic)

**TWO COW GARAGE: The Death of the Self Preservation Society: CD**

The early records by this band, particularly the masterpiece, *The Wall Against Our Back*, are some of the best rocking alt-country stuff that I have ever heard. Unfortunately, the last couple of albums have been a little more "interesting" and mature, though still good. Well, I am glad to report that Two Cow Garage are back to rocking, and this record is fantastic. Take a little of the Figgs, some Uncle Tupelo, the rockin' side of Lucero, and you will be in the area that TCG are when they're at their best. Glad to see them come back swinging with this great new record and hoping to hear more. —Mike Frame (Last Chance, lastchancerecords.com)

**TWOPOINTEIGHT: Outburst: 7"**

Based on the (admittedly quite nice) cover art, was kinda expecting some hardcore or dark metal variant, but no, it's more of a punky indie rock variant.

There's maybe a whisper of soul buried in the A-side, while the flip ups the punk quota with singalong elements in the chorus. Nice single. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pirates Press)

**UK SUBS: Riot: LP**

This, along with *Quintessentials*, marked something like twenty years of the UK Subs and original guitarist Nicky Garratt coming back temporarily to mark the occasion. I remember liking this quite a bit when it was first released around 1996/97. It's nowhere near as good as the early stuff, but held up against a lot of what was coming out in the 1990s, this isn't too bad. They had one foot in the past and one in the present of that time. The punkier edges were softened to some degree with the poppy tendencies of what was passing as punk in the dreadful '90s. "Paradise Burning" has a main riff that recalls the Subs in their glory years, though the reggae influence details the song. There are some moments, with songs like "Human Rights," "Preacher," and the title track, but none of them are exactly scorchers. Nowhere near on par with "C.I.D." or "Stranglehold." On the whole, this record did not age well—okay songs surrounded by a lot of filler and not something I would go back to when I can listen to the earlier, stronger, and better material. —M.Avrq (Papagajuv Hlasatel, phr.cz)

**ULTRA BIDÉ: DNA Vs DNA-c: CD/LP**

The Japanese three-piece Ultra Bidé has been together since the late 1970s, and this is the first I'm hearing of them.

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Researching the band, I learned they were on the forefront of the avant-garde, punk, and noise scenes in Japan. (In an alternate universe, I can see Ultra Bidé as the bastard child of a late 1970s Japanese version of Andy Warhol.) It seems as though those genre descriptions still apply on this latest album, *DNA Vs DNA-c*. This is their fifth release for Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles label and their first U.S. release in over ten years. The music is chaotic—but still cohesive—with strong playing by the bass and drums and crazy, broken vocals. The band sings in English, but many of their lyrics make little to no sense: “Such a fuckin I’m a killing dead / Such a fuckin I’m a thinking dead / Such a fuckin I’m a living dead / What’s going on human race, what a liar” (“Civil Action”). Or: “Phase is massive power attack weapon” (“Phase Is Massive Power Attack Weapon”). At the risk of losing some listeners, I wish more non-native English speaking bands would sing in their native language. I’ve always appreciated those bands more because it doesn’t seem forced and the songs almost always flow more naturally. Ultra Bidé has obviously never concerned themselves with making popular music and it doesn’t seem to have changed now. I know there are fans of obscure Japanese avant-garde (is there ever non-obscure avant-garde music?) out there. They’ll probably eat this up, and I might have too, even with my lack of knowledge of the band, but the vocals really turned me off. —Kurt Morris (Alternative Tentacles)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS

##### *Puke and Destroy III: 7”*

Three bands (two songs each) from the Land of the Rising Sun again served up by the illustrious Snuffy Smiles. Your Pest Band is this generation’s Teenegenerate. Fast, blown out, incomprehensible, fantastic. Dog Hotel brings the jangle with a Beatles’ beat behind drunk Replacements tunes and an almost Dead Milkmen delivery. But Car10 is the gem and the lyrics to “Get Drunk” alone are worth hunting down the 7”. Both Car10 songs strike a Blotto cord. We need more Blotto in our lives, ergo, more Car10. —Matt Seward (Snuffy Smiles)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### *The Songs of Tony Sly: A Tribute: CD*

Does anyone ever *really* dig a tribute album? I mean, how often do you hear a cover that trumps the work that it’s paying tribute to? It happens, sure, but it’s rare. And, sadly, that’s the case with this beautiful sentiment as well. Granted, Tony’s shoes are no easy fill. These songs were the soundtrack to *so* many lives, mine certainly being no exception; and, inevitably, a slowed-down ska version of, well, *any* of them is going to fall way short of the mark. And, fuck, I’m getting tired of the, “I’m an old punk dude but now I play folky-country-subpar-lazy garbage now” thing. Luckily, there are a few amazing, fist-biting, tear-jerking heartbreakers on here (Karina Denike and Joey Cape’s contributions brilliantly display an obviously intimate and memory-filled

relationship with Tony), and even a couple of the ragers are exciting enough to make me smile (Strung Out’s “Soulmate” is a *shredder*), but the rest of the record mostly makes me wish I was hearing the far-superior originals and leaves me aching for a dude I felt like I knew. A wonderful tribute, no doubt, and what an honor it must have been to be asked, but, unfortunately, the final result is too hit or miss for my liking. Rest easy. —Dave Williams (Fat Wreck)

#### VISITORS, THE: *Yeti: LP*

Strong vocal melodies are a serious business. Canadian punks, The Visitors, are making out like bandits. From the get go, the group’s sound is akin to The Soviettes and The Marked Men. It’s a style of pop punk that bombards the senses with sugary sweetness and causes auditory hyperglycemia. The riffs strike like a whip, the background vocal harmonies are robust, the lyrics are playful, and the hi-hat-laden beats are relentless. “Golden Coast” just might be one of the catchiest songs ever concocted. Highly recommended for a long head-bobbing drive; you’re neck might end up hating you, but it’ll be worth the bone-creaking aftermath. —Sean Arenas (It’s Alive)

#### WHATEVER BRAINS: *Self-titled: LP*

They’ve battered down the noise quota a bit from the last album I heard—seem to recall ‘em kicking it up something mean—but they do keep the “weird” intact here. One


moment yer thinkin’, “they clearly love their Devo, Neubauten and Foetus records,” the next yer all, “what is this, fuggin’ circus music?” and then you find yourself pondering if they’d cop to the musicals that inspired their cacophonous caterwauling. Definitely not the same ol’ shit and this listener couldn’t be happier. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

#### WHITE REAPER: *Self-titled: 7”*

This album is catchy as hell. The A-side starts off with some quick drums and a quick sliding riff. It’s definitely poppy, but it doesn’t sound like everyone else; the sliding vocals over top the fuzzy guitar and bass make for an energy that I don’t hear too often. It has a uniqueness to it that at least I haven’t heard. The guitars and bass are noisy with nothing but high end. What really stood out about this album was the singing. The way the vocals slide around is awesome. I don’t hear too many bands do it, and even fewer bands do it well, but White Reaper does a great job. I had the song on the A-side stuck in my head for a good few days. The flip side is just as good as the first. The recording is fuzzy as hell, and while nothing groundbreaking, this is an awesome album that has just the right amount of pop in a noisy, fuzzy setting. —James Meier (Earthbound)

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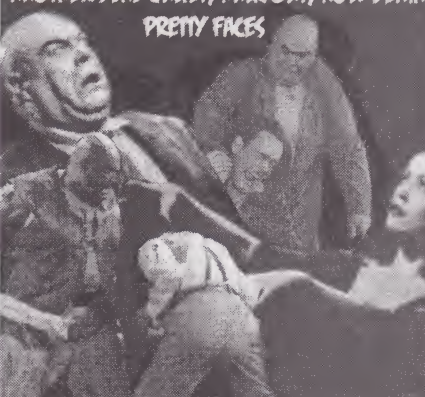
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- **Alec Morrison**, PO Box 1053, Haileybury, ON, POJ 1K0 Canada
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- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141
- **Amsterdam Recording Company**, KNSM-Laan 31, 1019 LA, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- **Area Pirata**, Via Manetti, 5 56031 Bientina (Pisa), Italy
- **Bachelor**, 5421 Adnet 186, Austria
- **Beach Impediment**, PO Box 8335, Virginia Beach, VA 2345
- **Bigger Boat**, 305 Melody Circle, Swannanoa, NC 28778
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB, UK
- **Bridge 9**, 119 Foster St., Building 4 Suite 3, Peabody, MA 01960
- **Build Me A Bomb HQ**, 12 Rue Kuhlman - RDC, 59000 Lille, France
- **Cloud Recordings**, Box 821, Athens, GA 30603
- **Coextinction**, 173 6th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY 11215
- **Contraszt!**, Wippermannstrasse 12, 51103 Köln, Germany
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- **DC Jam**, 1722 S Glenstone Ave., Suite W, Room 400, Springfield, MO 65804
- **Dead Beat**, PO Box 361392, Cleveland, OH 44136
- **Dead Lamb**, 87 Auburn Heights, Athlone, Westmeath, Ireland
- **Dead Moose** c/o Kimmo Niskanen, Pitkakatu 32 A 10, 40700 Jyväskylä, Finland
- **Deadbeat**, PO Box 361392, Cleveland, OH 44136
- **Deranged**, c/o Gordon Dufresne, 2700 Lower Road, Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W4, Canada
- **Dirt Cult**, 713 Stagecoach Dr., Las Cruces, NM 88011
- **Dirtnap**, 3840 SE Gladstone St., Portland, OR 97202
- **Dirty Rabbit**, 1839 47th Ave., SF, CA 94122
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- **Fat Wreck Chords**, 2196 Palou Ave., SF, CA 94124
- **FDR**, 141 Recklesstown Way, Chesterfield, NJ 08515
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- **Floridas Dying**, 1414 Shady Lane Dr., Orlando, FL 32804
- **Fuzz City**, 2100 Miramonte Ave. #1, San Leandro, CA 94578
- **General Speech**, PO Box 24842, Lexington, KY 40524
- **Ghostbot**, 21815 Peppercorn Dr., Santa Clarita, CA 91350
- **Goblinhaus**, PO Box 53095, Knoxville, TN 37950
- **Going Underground**, 1822 G St., Bakersfield, CA 93301
- **Goner**, 2152 Young Ave., Memphis, TN 38104
- **Grave Mistake**, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241
- **Halo Of Flies**, 3444 N. Bremen St., Milwaukee, WI 53212
- **Halvfabrikat**, Ringvägen 18 B, S-532 72 Axvall, Sweden
- **Hardware**, PO Box 1646, 49006 Osnabruck, Germany
- **Hellcat**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **High Roller**, Marienthaler Str. 78, 08060 Zwickau, Germany
- **Hip Kid**, 2020 N. California Ave. #276, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Horror Business**, Am Kapellenknapp 13, 59379 Selm, Germany
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- **Iron Lung**, PO Box 95521, Seattle, WA 98145
- **It's Alive**, 11411 Hewes St., Orange, CA 92869
- **Jailhouse**, 2807 Bending Oak Dr., Hampton, VA 23666
- **Jiffy Marker**, 311-319 East 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V5T 1M9, Canada
- **Last Laugh**, 313 President St. #2, Brooklyn, NY 11231
- **Latest Flame**, 1017 E. Lyon, Milwaukee, WI 53202
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- **Manic Depression**, c/o Jean-Louis Martel, 6 Place Gabriel Peri, 92310 Sevres, France
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- **Profane Existence**, PO Box 18051, MPLS, MN 55418
- **Protagonist**, PO Box 64574, Tucson, AZ 85728
- **Psychic Volt**, PO Box 310284, Brooklyn, NY 11231
- **Radius**, 13310 Kibbings Rd., San Diego CA 92130
- **Reality Is A Cult**, 1693 N. Broad St., Galesburg, IL 61401
- **Rotten To The Core**, 1471 E. Main St., Ventura, CA 93001
- **Rumbletowne**, PO Box 663, Olympia, WA 98507
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- **Sandal Stomp**, 705 Spears Ave., Chattanooga, TN 37405
- **Savage Quality**, 308 Clinton St., Columbus, OH 43202
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- **Shake!**, 4203 Rossier Dr., Victoria, BC, V8N 4S8, Canada
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- **Volar**, 2129 Westland Ave., San Diego, CA 92104
- **Voodoo Rhythm**, Wankdorffeldstrasse 92, 3014 Bern, Switzerland
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# ZINE REVIEWS

Send all zines for review to:  
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“Rapist Halted  
by Cat Attack.”  
Now that I’ve got  
your attention...”

—Simon Sotelo  
*CATS HATE COPS*

## AGAINST THE POVERTY OF LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT: THESES ON THE CELL PHONE,

\$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 4 pgs.  
Numbered list of capsulated arguments either against the ubiquity of cell phones and their malicious effect on modern society. Speaking of the poverty of language (his being the case against text messages), some of this language is a little too much for me. Hyperbole is a good way to discredit, or at least distract from, your logic in political screeds: “Cellular technology is transforming man into a cyborg” made me reconsider every other drastic opening statement (most of which actually held up, though). Regardless, I am super down with this and now just want to do my own wingnut pamphlet. Not gonna give up my cell phone, but I do hear this person’s frustrations man our increasingly scary and alienating world and mostly think, “Yeah, makes sense.” —Dave Brainwreck (Jason Rodgers, PO Box 62, Lawrence, MA 01842)

## AS YOU WERE: A PUNK COMIX ANTHOLOGY #2, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",

offset with card stock cover, 80 pgs.  
Reading the tales in this sophomore issue of this Mitch Clem-curated zine, it’s not hard to imagine that the title is intended as a reflection. Many of the comics in this volume relay messages of the people we used to be and the memories that shape the person we are now. It’s hard to judge this volume as a whole cohesive work, because, you know, it’s not. This issue’s theme is “The Pit,” which even includes one artist who incorporated the mandatory *Parks and Recreation* reference. The talent included in the book is astounding, with over twenty contributors listed on the credits page. There’s not a wasted page (except for this one weird page where the panels only go halfway down) and almost every contribution is a winner. My favorites were Ben Snakepit’s storyboard for a D.R.I. music video, Kettnerd’s moshing instruction diagrams, and a very emotional comic from Mitch Clem about the internal

feedback loop that comes from overanalyzing one’s own actions. There’s a good amount of variety in the book and a lot of good comics that I can’t find room to mention. My one complaint is the similar ground that most of the comics tread to set up their premise. A lot of “I don’t go in the pit because it’s scary” type set-ups. Either way, this is essential reading if you like comic books and punk rock, which I’m pretty sure is most people who like punk rock. Grade: A- —Bryan Static (Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110, silversprocket.net)

## AS YOU WERE: A PUNK COMIX ANTHOLOGY #2, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",

offset with card stock cover, 80 pgs.  
If there are two things I love, it’s independent comics and good punk rock stories. The first issue of *As You Were* had me totally giddy from this delicious combination, and I’m stoked that its follow-up is another excellent compilation of comix. Number two features stories all about the pit. Between panels of broken glasses and bruised egos are tales of growing up, dealing with anxiety, and becoming comfortable with who you are. As a lady who’s dealt with shitty times in the pit and crippling anxiety, (hi Mitch!) I know this issue will become dog-eared quick. It’s funny, genuinely moving, and worth more than your five dollars. Even if you’ve never been in the pit before, there’s plenty here to relate to. —Candice Tobin (Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club, 1057 Valencia St., SF, CA 94110, silversprocket.net)

## BEING UGLY MAKES YOU STUPID, copied, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 36 pgs.

Dark, photocopied photos of bands and people hanging out at shows, collaged over an assortment of backgrounds. —Chris Terry (2946B North Fraternity St., Milwaukee, WI 53212)

## BENEATH THE SAME SKY, ?\$, 5" x 8 1/2", copied, 8 pgs.

Folded-over one sheet about a Japanese post-hardcore and screamo scene I know absolutely nothing about (except the stuff about it I read just now). Live and record review. One band

interview. Pretty cool and effective format for a zine that’s more focused on a subgenre—easy to crank out and easy to digest (sixty pages on screamo is easier than this to walk away from without giving it a shot). This is not rushed or dashed off, but I hope that *BTSS* utilizes the speed in which they can get these out to build up some momentum and energy for themselves and their readers. —Dave Brainwreck (Jason Rodgers, PO Box 62, Lawrence, MA 01842)

## CATS HATE COPS \$?

5 1/2" x 7 1/2" photocopied, 64 pgs.  
“Rapist Halted by Cat Attack.” Now that I have your attention, I will help you with any leftover confusion. *Cats Hate Cops* is a charming mixture of dense and repetitive reading material with goofy satire. Brought to you by the New York Year Zero, aka AFFECT group, who typically publishes anarchist essays, released this clever compilation of adorable assault stories. You might be asking yourself how AFFECT made light of such a touchy subject; well the answer is “cats.” This zine is a compilation of news reports about cats that attack cops, from 1805-2012. One thing I like about its layout is that it isn’t made of collaged clippings that are tiled into clusters, but rather they are full-page photocopies straight from the sourced newspaper. We get to look back at a century-long timeline, of dueling headlines that were actually used to attract readers. For instance, the headline, “Tree Cat Bites Helping Hand That Frees It,” appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune* circa 1934 and was given a bigger title than its neighboring story “Veteran Fatally Stabbed Defending Brother, 16.” That is as fascinating as it is depressing, but the main point of this zine isn’t really a sociological study. It is very simply collected news reports with one very specific theme. This is not a zine to read straight through. Sixty-plus pages of cats being assholes can get tedious, it is however delightful and will keep you company if you often have five to ten minutes of spare time.

If you are like me and you feel like most cats are being assholes for no reason, then this zine will justify those sentiments. Though, once in a while, we find proof of a cat that’ll fight off a rapist to save you so—I guess—cats can be cool sometimes. I still enjoy finding this in my purse when I find myself in need of a quick read. Should you ever come across *Cats Hate Cops*, I recommend adding it to your library. —Simon Sotelo (year0.org)

## DRAFT DODGER #1, free, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 56 pgs.

Solid music zine in the tradition of *MRR*, *Heartattack*, *Give Me Back*, *Razorcake*, etc. Newsprint, excellent photos, consistently smart layout, and solid writing. Interviews with Chris Hannah of Propagandhi, Pedals On Our Pirate Ships, and Shoppers. A Philly scene report, articulate columns, some comics, reviews. An exceptional effort, especially for a first issue. I’m really hoping they manage to line up enough ad revenue to keep this thing going—even if it winds up not being free like it is now. *Draft Dodger* features some really impressive material, is so clearly a labor of love, and is definitely worth seeking out. —Keith Rosson (Draft Dodger, 1611 S. Meadow St., Richmond, VA 23220)

## DRAFT DODGER #1, free, newsprint, 8 1/2" x 11", 56 pgs.

A *HeartAttack*-lookin’ zine from Richmond, featuring interviews with Shoppers, Chris Hannah of Propagandhi, and Pedals On Our Pirate Ships. The comics and columns all answer the question, “How did you get into punk?” and the young rebel coming of age stories add a sense of newness and idealism to an already cool project. —Chris Terry (1611 S. Meadow St., Richmond, VA 23220)

## EXPLODING BUFFALO, Vol. 1, Issue VI, photocopied, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 35 pgs.

This is the “Sexuality” issue and in the middle is a pop-up penis cutout which is hand-glued. It is the star of this issue. Also included are provocative illustrations: vaginas, penises, and buttholes get pretty

much equal time. All that's pretty good, but the text is, overall, a little disappointing in this collaborative zine. No clear distinction is made between "sex" and "sexuality." ("Love" and "sex" also seem to be often interchanged indiscriminately.) Under the precept of fiction, women are casually called "bitch" several times. With a few exceptions—Nicole Macias has a distinct voice—this issue almost feels like writing assignment first drafts, which is too bad. Talking intelligently and frankly about sexuality is something we all could benefit from exploring. —Todd Taylor (explodingbuffalo.com)

of Celebrated Summer Records and the band Deep Sleep. Pence had a number of interesting things to say about his experiences of owning and working at an independent record store and about his experiences in the scene over the years, including behind the mic of a number of great bands. The quality of the interviews was very high, a credit to the writers who contributed. The layout had both a cut and paste feel and a more professional design look. I appreciated the mix. —Paul J. Comeau (Free State HQ, 837 W. 35<sup>th</sup> St., Baltimore, MD 21211)

**SOME BAND INTERVIEWS IN ALL CAPS WITH HARDLY ANY BREAKS?** O dos cosas en Español? *Maybe an all-snipped-up interview in italics?* Write-ups of records that are old enough to be president? Then check this out. —Chris Terry (Shiva Addanki, 61 The Terrace, Katonah, NY 10536)

#### IT WILL ALL MAKE SENSE

**TOMORROW #2**, \$2,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 14 pgs.

Totally charming comic zine about punks over thirty having a bit of a crisis. (It's helpful for me to just double a punk's age to put into "human" years: thirty = sixty

**MISHAP #32**, \$1 or trade, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 32 pgs.

Ryan Mishap's thirty-second issue of his *Mishap* zine, titled *Mistakes Were Made*, is broken up into short stories that recount some important lesson or event from his childhood and adolescence growing up in and around Central Oregon. He does an excellent job of selecting stories from his youth that, together, form an outline of who he was: he was a child who chased after the family dog for miles in the desolate area surrounding the family home, all because he thought his dad liked the dog more than him. He was a teen who learned a hard lesson when he

**"Okay, true, there's copious amounts of cussing, nudity, drug use, and violence here. Shit, there's even a sieg heiling pet rat. But..."**

—Keith Rosson | *LIFE IS POSERS #1*

**FAIR DIG #2**, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 30 pgs.

Strong personal zines are largely about self-definition, the casting off of other people's expectations—society's even—and doing some deep self-examination. But what happens when you fail at your self-imposed goals that you've written about, that your peers are stoked that you were doing? You dig a little deeper. Coming off an injury, Brodie joins a CrossFit gym, embraces zine culture, makes meaningful connections with fellow artists, establishes associations to fitness and DIY culture and... still hasn't figured it all out or found a happiness beyond brief flashes of real joy. He's still in a "nope, something's not right" place although he's made all of this positive change. Life's like that sometimes. You get picked on, you want to punch back. You pick at a scar, it won't stop bleeding, and you're running out of gauze. An honest zine. —Todd Taylor (fairdig.com, fairdig@gmail.com)

**FREE STATE #2**, \$?

8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 66 pgs.

*Free State* is one of the best zines documenting a local music scene I've had the pleasure of coming across. Focusing on the Maryland hardcore scene, this issue features an extended scene report of the Gaithersburg Punx. The report includes a bit-overlong roll call of individuals and their contributions, and a list of the most important bands and releases, written by one of their own. The zine also featured a number of interviews with bands and individuals from Maryland, including Planos Become The Teeth, Praise, and Tony Pence

**GENERAL SPEECH OMNIBUS #1**, \$6 / €7/¥700, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 28 pgs.

As the title suggests, this zine is a collection of the first four issues of *General Speech*, a fanzine that carries on the spirit of the writer's previous zine, *Evil Minded*. Both were born out of the writer's simultaneous discontent with his local punk scene and inability to understand why some of his favorite hardcore bands were being largely ignored. This compendium features interviews with bands from across the globe—Mexico's Inservibles, Japan's Death Dust Extractor, Switzerland's The Decay, Australia's Teargas—as well as across the country (Portland's Bellicose Minds; New York's No Fucker). As a person who knows absolutely nothing about hardcore punk except that she probably doesn't hate it, I was intrigued to find that this was unput-down-able. I'm not quite sure how interesting this would be for a person who's actually in to hardcore and isn't hearing about this stuff for the first time, but this zine definitely got me to check out every single band interviewed in its pages. Be warned, though, the first five pages are written in all-caps text in a tiny font, meaning you will need a ruler to read this for extended periods. —Bianca (General Speech Omnibus #1, PO Box 24842, Lexington, KY 40524, generalspeech@gmail.com)

**HARDCORE ANACHRONISTIC ASSEMBLY Vol. 1**, copied,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 44 pgs.

Put together by a cabal of ten zine editors, in the name of preserving the art form, *HAA* is a clusterfuck of the Factsheet 5-era cut 'n' paste variety. HEY DO YOU WANT TO READ

= nearing retirement.) Punk's a curious beast. Think about it too much and it doesn't make much sense. Compare it to broad social movements, and it pretty much falls apart. But where its power lies is in the one-on-one connection, the fact that it still genuinely exists and continues to evolve. New kids legitimately still find it meaningful years after its latest trend cycle's crashed and popular culture wants nothing to do with it besides delegitimize it. Sanden Totten's got a light, subtle, generous touch. He wants punk "to work" and finds real-time redemption in bands playing VFWs and community halls, playing vinyl at home, and participating in a non-creepoid, non-chomo, healthy way. Excellent zine. —Todd Taylor (sandentotten@hotmail.com)

**LIFE IS POSERS #1**, \$5,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", offset, 60 pgs.

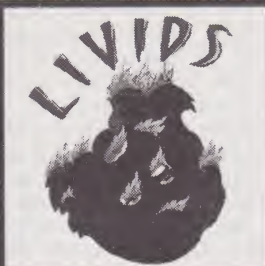
Okay, true, there's copious amounts of cussing, nudity, drug use, and violence here. Shit, there's even a sieg heiling pet rat. But at its core, *Life Is Posers* is a comic indebted by and in loving homage to punk in all of its trappings, hypocrisies, and goofiness. Taking place throughout one night and jumping between a bevy of characters at a party, with each page being part of the longer story as well as its own separate gag, *LiP* #1 is actually cute and kind of sweet. Sure, people get pummeled and mocked and threatened, but everyone's back to normal in the next page. A genuine, heartfelt, and downright funny spoof on punk, meticulously drawn and very, very smart. Nice job. —Keith Rosson (Mike Kadomiya, 53 Beacon St. #2, Somerville, MA 02143)

attempted to work with city government to build a skate park (lesson: don't trust the government). The artful, clear way he tells the stories tells a bit about who he is now. A stand-out story, "A Place in the Scene," details a brief, one-sided friendship that Ryan had as a teen with a cool adult. Because he couldn't fathom why this person would want to be his friend, he kept him at a distance and eventually ruined any semblance of a friendship between them. The story begins with a command: "Accept that you have a place in the scene that you are in. Don't make excuses and don't apologize for your presence. Don't let inexperience and insecurity hold you back." —Bianca (Mishap #32, PO Box 5841, Eugene, OR 97405, mishapzine@yahoo.com)

**MY F@!%D UP APT. BLDG.: AN AMERICAN MEMOIR OF LOW-RENT HOUSING**, Vol. 1-2, \$?

7" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 24 pgs.

Michael L. Treat uses words and illustrations in both installments of this zine to tell stories from his four-plus years in a St. Paul tenement building. Ink is his medium, which works well stylistically, as many of the stories told here are grim. The various black and grey tones throughout both installments serve his wide-eyed reporting of cops, livestock, and loneliness well throughout. I got both of these at the same time, so it's interesting to look at the differences in approach: in the first issue, Treat uses a thin, kinda comic-y font, for lack of a better term, to deliver the narratives that accompany each of his drawings. I didn't think much of this choice one way or the other until the second issue, in which he switches to a thicker, blockier font, which adds more

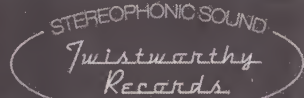


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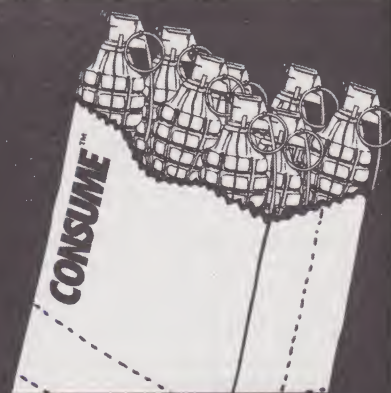
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weight to each page. With all this said, the heft, both visually and narratively, is offset by humor, which makes the more disturbing stories that much more impactful. I'm assuming Mr. Treat has a limited number of stories, but there's no reduction of their quality from the first issue to the second, so I'm interested to see where he goes from here. —Michael T. Fournier (Michael L. Treat LLC/Smirking Tiger, PO Box 6928, MPLS, MN 55406)

**NEW AMAZONS, THE #1,**  
\$4.50, 8" x 11", 24 pgs.

Get this: there's a public domain superhero from the 1970s that was created by a Czech artist who pretended a comic his friends drew (by later stealing said comic and editing the art and dialogue) was actually drawn by a Russian political group in direct opposition to the Soviet Union. Okay, whatever. That's cool back story and all, but it's prelude to the fact that this book uses that character as its premise. Her name is Octobriana, and she is joined by five other women in revealing outfits who have powers and costumes to represent their countries. The creative team has decided there are not enough women ironically representing countries or enough superhero comics on the market. Because, hey, it's not like superhero comics are two thirds of the current comic book market. So, you know, thanks for that. It's not like the concept is particularly novel, since it's been happening since superheroes have existed. The book feels like it's grasping for a feminist statement, but falls short. The costume choices are laughable and utilize old concepts that felt dated twenty years ago. Despite being stuck in the embarrassing years of costume choice and dialogue, the comic is bold enough to proclaim that it is not like other superhero comics. A great deal is made of a main character killing a nameless enemy mook because, hey, superheroes can kill. Edgy, right? Only buy if you are an Octobriana fanboy, if those exist. Grade: D-.

—Bryan Static (Kult Creations, kultcreations.blogspot.com)

**PASAZER #30, \$10,**  
8" x 11 1/2", offset, 208 pgs.

I had to double check the page count on this! Yep, 208 pages, and they are crammed with information. If this zine were in English, it could very well be one of the most-read zines in the world. The focus is international, and they have more than just columns, reviews, and interviews. There are articles on punk parenting, record collecting, Nazis in Podhale, and more. Then there are the pieces on Black Flag, Faith, a Cymeon X tour report, and interviews with Agnostic Front, Astrid Lindgren, Fort BS, Hard To Breathe, Sa-Int, Arrestum, Negative Approach, World/

Inferno Friendship Society, Collina, and more than I have space to mention. The layouts are easy to follow despite the massive amounts of information here, and the photos are mostly well done, and very well reproduced. This also comes with a CD sampler. —M.Avg (PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, Poland, pasazer@pasazer.pl)

**PUNXELATED PHOTO ZINE #1,**  
\$?, 8 1/2" x 11", full color, 63 pgs.

Holy cow, this is impressive—a one-hundred percent DIY, full-color, glossy photazine. Marc Gärtner is a German punk photographer who's been in the field for the past six years, travelling to thirteen European countries, eight states in the U.S., and has amassed an archive of over 60,000 photos. Learning by doing. His talent's obvious. He's got great timing, the photos are excellently framed, he captures the energy of the bands. What's also really engaging in Marc's text. He gives practical advice on punk photography (putting a flashlight underneath Mikey Erg's drum set was a really good idea) and does it for the pure love of it. It's interesting to see him navigate both large shows with strict shooting rules and basement shows with no lighting. With all good photazines, the details keep you engaged. (Sloppy Seconds has a fitness trampoline for stage divers. Bill Stevenson of the Descendents has a gnarly lobotomy-looking scar.) My only selfish suggestion to Marc is more cross-page spread photos. They just look so damn good. Highly recommended. —Todd Taylor (Marc Gärtner, Adenauerallee 8, 53113 Bonn, Germany, punxelated.com, marc@punxelated.com)

**REBEL CLOTHES, REBEL SONGS, REBEL POSE: ANARCHISTS ON PUNK ROCK 1977-2010,**  
8 1/2" x 7", free, copied, 47 pgs.

If you have an interest in anarchist politics and philosophy, you might love this zine. It works almost like a Cliff's Notes for anarchist punk criticism, or like a greatest hits of anarchist thinkers critiquing underground culture. You get a collection of pieces from places like AK Press, Profane Existence, and Crimethinc; you don't have to track down back issues or out-of-print books. But for the casual reader, or for someone who follows underground music but finds anarchist ideas played-out or even delusional, this zine will likely leave you confused and angry and bored. Occasionally, a writer will touch on something interesting or something worth exploring—the fact that punk has been an almost overwhelmingly white movement, or “the importance of skill, craft, and excellence as it applies to life in a human community outside of the demands of capitalist society”—but then they quickly brush past it to get to their main point, some vague thing about the “revolution.” Or they make

bold assertions about, say, economic policy in the U.S. following World War II and then offer no supporting evidence. Most of the pieces come off as rambling anarchist op-eds by people who can't decide whether or not they want to sound academic. The Fifth Estate talks about '60s music being the sound of revolution, and then calls Talking Heads and Ramones records “terrible” (talk about losing all credibility right out of the gate, and I don't just mean punk credibility). Joel Olson talks about “destroying America as it stands” and then urges us to help local farmers. Santiago Gomez paces around his bedroom and does little pirouettes, gushing about straight edge and its relationship to the “revolution” (his edgebreak should be epic). Cindy Crabb's “How We Turned Our Shitty Little Town into a Punk Rock Mecca: A Ten-Point Program” is the only worthwhile, practical piece, and you can probably find that online. But what bothers me the most about these anarchist readings of punk—aside from the often mediocre writing and the lack of real insight—is that it breaks music down into a weird binary, where you're either part of some unspecified revolution or you're part of something empty and commercial. It's a narrow view that effectively ignores nuance, character, color, or anything on the spectrum of emotion or feeling or performance that isn't related to capital or collectivism or whatever else. I read some of these pieces and thought “how many bands could these people even like, given what they think is important?” Are they just not going to admit they listen to Fleetwood Mac and Prince like the punks and anarchists I know? Can we get real? There's so much hand-wringing over how punk relates to anarchism, and, in the process, they take something like punk, that could be (and sometimes is) an art form, suck all the esoteric and wild and limitless possibilities out of it, and leave you with some barely coherent screed that amounts to nothing. What a drag it would be to talk music with these rebels. Meanwhile, punk is the only little world that will give anarchists the time of day, and who knows why we do it. Call it quasi-rebellious guilt, or politeness. Sigh, sure man, I'll check out your zine. I only wish the content of this zine was as cool as its title. —Matt Werts (whatwedoissecret@riseup.net)

**SEVEN INCHES TO FREEDOM #11,**  
\$3, 8 1/2" x 11", printed, 24 pgs.

Do you know what dedication looks like? Joe Lachut of *SITF* doesn't because he's been so far up its ass for the last decade (at least?) that he's camped out in mile forty-seven of its small intestine. I don't say this because this zine is incredibly prolific, dense, or absolutely goddamn serious: in fact, Joe apologizes that he's de-prioritized

the zine for his other projects, hence it being so slim compared to old issues. I say that because he can have forty more important things on his plate and he still puts out a fantastic-looking, thoughtful, and *worthwhile* effort into the world with this issue. Band interviews with Shoxx (Says something, e.g. “I'm a family man. To many, that's extremely fucked up and outside the box.”) and Ex-Breathers (More run of the mill), music reviews, and columns. Best parallel is Joe taking a firm look at Church Whip's “Raping the East Coast Tour” controversy and not taking an easy out, even if it means ending up more inconclusive than anything (that's brave in writing), and then interviewing Mykel Board about his dismissal from *MRR*—definitely the most passionate and insightful thing Joe did in here. Highly recommended, forever and always. —Dave Brainwreck (Joe Lachut, PO Box 457, Ft. Myers, FL 33902, hiszeroisgone@yahoo.com)

**THROAT CULTURE #14, \$?,**

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 16 pgs  
Lots of personality, which is good, because, content-wise, this is basically just the last pages of most zines: the reviews section. Record and zine reviews make up ninety-five percent of this. All that's left over is a pretty funny interview with the Trashies where the author misses the show so just interviews somebody pretending to be the Trashies (whose answers make it perfectly ambiguous whether or not they've even heard the Trashies), which somehow was better than the last actual Trashies interview I read. —Dave Brainwreck (Gonk Publishing, 2700 White Ave #3, Chico, CA 95973)

**ZISK #23, 7" x 8 1/2",**  
photocopied, 25 pgs.

*Zisk* tags itself as “The Baseball magazine for people who hate baseball magazines.” This is true zine, niche-market success. As a baseball fan and admirer of good story-telling, *Zisk* is a success. This Fall, 2013 issue has stories of proposed rule changes, like allowing players to catch the ball in their hat (Why is that illegal?), and the greatest baseball nicknames, of which there are too many great ones to mention, but I like Ron “Louisiana Lightning” Guidry. The issue also pays tribute to two of my favorite childhood memories in an article on the decline of baseball card collecting and the time that senior citizen and Texas Rangers pitcher, Nolan Ryan, repeatedly punched the shit out of the much younger Robin Ventura, after Ventura charged the mound. Ah, the nostalgia. Check out *Zisk*! —John Mule (PO Box 469, Patterson, NY 12563)



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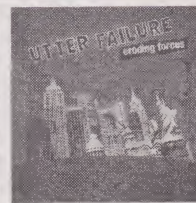
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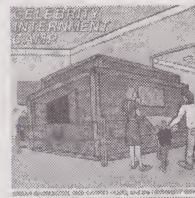
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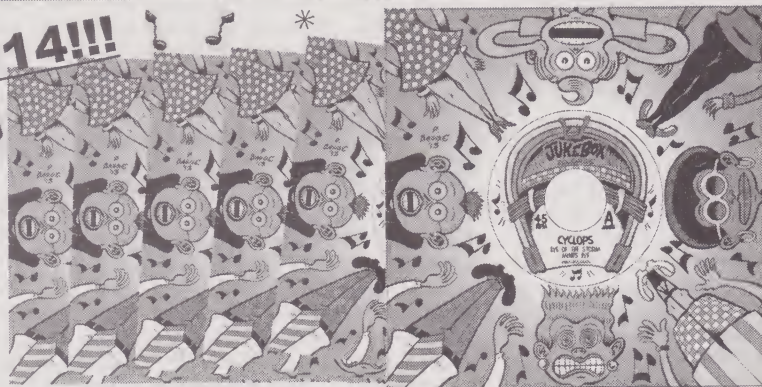
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### Crapalachia / Hill William

By Scott McClanahan, 169 pgs / 222 pgs

Readers, in the main, don't like short as much as long. They want to lose themselves in the big novels. They want something they can't get from movies and TV. They want (what they consider to be) their money's worth. They don't necessarily care about prose as much as plot. And that's fine (I just finished the 503-page *The Casual Vacancy*; you'd like

At first, *Hill William* seems insular, seems based on our reserve currency of dysfunction, and accordingly, feels too familiar. At first.

But you turn the pages just as rapidly as with *Crapalachia*, and characters become less dysfunctional and more tragic, and the town, the region, becomes its own character, meaner than the other characters—and there are some mean ones in *Hill William*—and by the end, the stories have combined into something greater than their sum (which quality always makes me think of Half Japanese's album *Charmed Life*) and you realize that the conflict of the book that you just read (on two ninety-minute mass transit commutes, in my case) is man against nature, the nature of that mean town, that mean region. Or maybe all that meanness comes from the invisible gargoyles of the mining companies, perched on the mountains that surround these people. —Jim Woster (Two Dollar Radio, TwoDollarRadio.com / Tyrant Books, 676A 9th Ave. #153, Chicago, IL 10036, NYTyrant.com)

### Hard Art: DC 1979

By Lucian Perkins, 94 pgs.

While Washington DC's much-lauded hardcore scene revolving around Dischord Records has been extensively documented via nearly all media imaginable, comparatively precious little has popped up about the scene's beginnings, the early half of the book *Dance of Days* notwithstanding. I'm sure this is not due to any nefarious plot concocted by Ian MacKaye to corner the market on the punk stock index so's he can keep hisself and his pals up to their eyeballs in sno-cones and Funyuns (yeah, I know he's a vegan. Just funnin', so unclench for a minute, you puritanical punk type-a-types), but it is nonetheless a rarity to see/read stuff that predates the hardCore heyday, which is exactly what makes this a treat.

Photographer Lucien Perkins was assigned by the *Washington Post* to get some shots to accompany an article about local punk rockers. Collected here are a number of the resulting photos he took at three Bad Brains shows late in 1979—one in the quad or a low-income housing complex,

**"I'm sure this is not due to any nefarious plot concocted by Ian MacKaye to corner the market on the punk stock index so's he can keep hisself and his pals up to their eyeballs in sno-cones and Funyuns."**

—Jimmy Alvarado, *Hard Art: DC 1979*

it; Rowling is one angry bird), but they're missing out on books like the 169-page *Crapalachia*.

McClanahan writes about growing up in a small town in West Virginia in the '90s. Roughly half is about living with both his more-or-less crazy (or arguably evil) grandmother and her son who is afflicted with severely debilitating cerebral palsy, and half is about moving in with his friend during his adolescence; the friend's mother is never there and they're essentially living without adult supervision—McClanahan never explains his own parents' absence.

He seems to remember an incident, write a short section about it, double-space down, write another short section about it—sometimes he free-associates a section that has not much to do with the incident—and the result is a kind of memoir-collage. This structure also makes for fast reading—the double-spacings are like breaths between sprints.

McClanahan is one of those writers who love to blur the lines between fiction and what actually happened, for whatever precious and/or tyrannical reason: "Reality is mine to determine. Ha!" Yes, I know, truth is up for grabs. But accuracy isn't. The book's copyright page features this: "Please see the Appendix and Notes section on pg. 159 for a statement from the Author regarding the imagined elements of this true story." *The imagined elements of this true story?* Am I the only one for whom that phrase invokes Ronald Reagan? Plus, when you read the Appendix and learn which elements are imagined, it's sort of like hearing McClanahan say, "Psych!"

But I bought his next book right when it came out, so he won.

*Hill William*, also set in Appalachia, also pretty short, is either a novel or a book of short stories that share the same narrator (whose name is Scott) and, frequently, the same characters.

At first, *Hill William* throws into relief what makes *Crapalachia* such a unique book: in *Crapalachia*, McClanahan looks outward—it's less about him than about the people he's living with—atypical for a modern memoir.

one at Madam's Organ, and one at the Hard Art gallery (hence the title). The photos are of course top-notch—no surprise seein' as the dude is a pro—and capture crucial glimpses of the scene when the "rules" defining approved punk fashion weren't yet codified. Like many peers in the greater punk scene, the locals were still working on their "look"—the results of which are on full display and would likely embarrass some of those same people today—as are faboo pics of Bad Brains, Trenchmouth, and Teen Idles whooping it up.

Sweetening the deal are some choice recollections of each gig from Alec MacKaye, who successfully aims to give the reader a then-fourteen-year-old attendee's feel for the shows rather than a bland blow-by-blow. History without being a historical overview, the book is a nice collection of a few brief snapshot moments from the infancy of one of the planet's most influential punk scenes. —Jimmy Alvarado (Akashic Books, PO Box 1546, NY, NY 10009)

### Life Won't Wait

By Michael Essington, 173 pgs.

Michael Essington's second book is certainly a page-turner, despite grievous errors, many of which could be fixed fairly simply. I'd reviewed Essington's chapbook he did with David Gurz, and found his fiction tale intriguing, if a bit rough. So, it was interesting to read some of Essington's non-fiction and see how he tackles that material. These are tales from his life, his experiences with his family and celebrities, as well as show reviews and interviews.

Essington writes from the heart and has some great stories to tell, whether it's meeting singer Eddie Money or experiences with his health. It's the substance of the material that made me read this in two sittings (although I could easily have made it one if it wasn't for responsibilities like work and sleep). The stories are cool in that they cover such a wide range of subjects, and ones that many of us can relate to as well: music,

family, and work. Others are less relatable: going to prison and siblings who steal your inheritance when your dad dies. Some of the tales are short and to the point, while others develop over the course of many pages.

As an author, Essington knows what makes for a good tale and writes in such a way that allows the reader to feel as though they're listening to a friend telling a story: it is comfortable and easy-going. Essington would never be accused of being formal or academic in his style and voice. And given the type of material he covers, it would be wrong for him to write in such a manner. He's rough around the edges (the guy seems to get in more fights in one book than I've been in my entire life). Often times I felt as though I was reading a zine that was thrown together rather than a book that had been edited and revised meticulously.

Unfortunately, there is a line between being too laid back and too formal in one's writing, especially in book form and *especially* when you have such great stories as Essington does. As I've often been told in my writing classes, ninety percent of writing is revision. And *Life Won't Wait* could use a great deal of it. More often than not, it was something where important details were left out of stories. For example, Essington served time in prison but doesn't ever go into any sort of detail about how he ended up there. Other times, it was details that were kept in that weren't necessary. In some cases, stories that were short could have been longer and vice versa.

An additional quibble—but one which needs to be mentioned in that it was affecting the reading—is the layout. There were blank pages at the end of a chapter where there didn't need to be, line breaks out of nowhere, and, on approximately a half dozen occasions, content would just repeat or disappear entirely. I'd be reading a paragraph, turn the page, and suddenly find myself in an entirely different paragraph. Some might say, "Fuck that, this is punk rock. It doesn't have to be perfect." But it's no different than listening to an album that skips in the middle of one song to a minute later. It's not compromising; it's about putting out a work that meets basic proofreading standards.

Just like you wouldn't put out an album without someone mastering the record, a book needs an editor. What *Life Won't Wait* needs is the heavy hand of an editor, a copyeditor, and a proofreader. Yes, finding these people takes time and money, but it's worth it to put out a work that you don't have to make any excuses about or provide any explanation for. The voice doesn't have to be compromised; it would be tightened and strengthened through the assistance of an editor. Providing such assistance for Essington's writing would take him from being a guy with some good stories to being a respectable writer with a presence. —Kurt Morris (Michael Essington, 17105 Roscoe Blvd. #3, Northridge, CA 91325)



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are a few dozen graying gen-X-ers who can't wait to get their hands on this and get nostalgic. It worked on me, and I'd never heard of this band. —Chris Terry (sweetrockdoc.com)

#### *Tribute to Ron Asheton:*

##### *Featuring Iggy & the Stooges & Special Guests: DVD*

Full disclosure: I only love about half the first Stooges album, I think *Fun House* pretty much sucks, and I generally find watching concert DVDs about as exciting as watching other people making out. That said, I like this DVD just fine. Recorded in Ann Arbor on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011, this is—as name suggests—a Stooges tribute show on behalf of departed Stooge Ron Asheton. After a few minutes of documentary-like pre-show footage, things kick off with a nearly half-hour onstage intro lecture by Henry Rollins. Clad in a clean black T-shirt and jeans, the audience cheers, laughs, and waxes solemn on his cues. It reminds me of watching *The Lawrence Welk Show* with my grandmother as a child. Eventually, the Rollins Travelogue abates, the Stooges emerge, and launch into "I Got a Right" with Hank on vocals. Hank yields the stage to Iggy, who looks as manic and ripped as

Henry Rollins. Clad in a clean black T-shirt and jeans, the audience cheers, laughs, and waxes solemn on his cues. It reminds me of watching *The Lawrence Welk Show* with my grandmother as a child.

—Rev. Nørb, *Tribute to Ron Asheton: Featuring Iggy & the Stooges & Special Guests*

#### *Sweet Rock: The Red Weasel Story: DVD*

Red Weasel was an alt-rock band from small-town Maryland, circa 1990. *Sweet Rock* includes a half hour documentary covering the band's original run, recent reunion, and a rerelease of their EP, *Rawlsdeerp*. While Red Weasel didn't do anything on a national scale, *Sweet Rock* shows how important they were in a certain place at a certain time. Every weekend, they'd host open rehearsals that attracted all of the local misfits and helped to form a community. Among the documentary's talking heads are a married couple who met at one of these parties. The band played Butthole Surfers-influenced alternative rock, with swirling guitars overtaking the drums and the occasional bit of heavy metal to shock the system. The music and movie aren't gonna knock you on your ass, but both are charming and lovingly rendered. If you've seen your favorite band play in a basement, you will definitely find this story heartwarming. I bet there

ever, except that his skin looks kinda like the film that you get on top of boiled milk. They blast into "Search and Destroy." Mike Watt is on bass. Everything is Archie. They play more songs; Iggy consumes more and more bottled water to keep up the Stoogely pace. Everything sounds great. Eventually, it's the weird things that keep my interest—the crowd dancing on the stage during "Shake Appeal," the orchestra who join the band during a few of the later numbers. I fold clothes in the other room during the jazzy crap off of *Fun House*. Sue me. Things come to a thunderous conclusion with "No Fun," as is right and just. I feel suitably enriched. The end. —Rev. Nørb (MVD Visual, mvdvisual.com)



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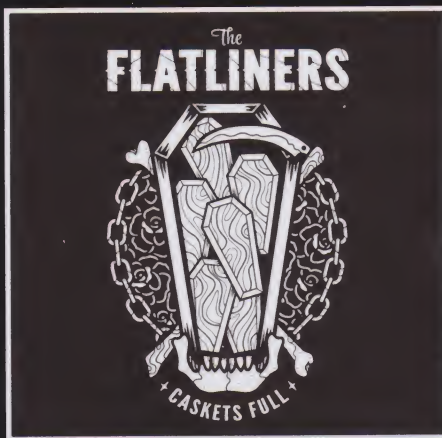
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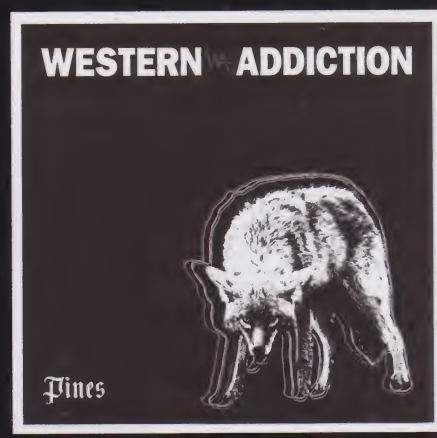
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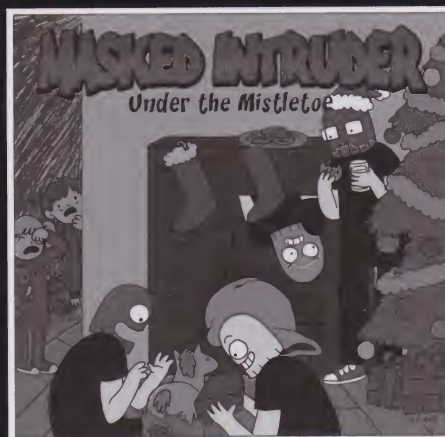
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